PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS SUPPORTING COUNTERINSURGENCY:
4TH PSYOP GROUP IN VIETNAM

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MICHAEL G. BARGER, MAJ, USA
B.S., United States Military Academy, West Point, NY, 1988

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Military and civilian agencies conducted Psychological Operations on an unprecedented scale during the Vietnam War. Emphasis on PSYOP from MACV and the U.S. Mission resulted in the creation of an interagency organization providing direction to the overall PSYOP effort. The military PSYOP force supporting MACV underwent a series of organizational changes over seven years as the force struggled to meet ever-increasing demands, but never reached their full potential in Vietnam. Difficulties in measuring effectiveness combined with a lack of understanding of PSYOP techniques and capabilities more often than not resulted in the relegation of PSYOP to supporting "sideshow" status rather than the full integration into supported unit planning necessary for success. However, the evolution of the PSYOP force and reports from participants provide numerous lessons learned applicable to current operations under the aegis of the Global war on Terrorism.

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Name of Candidate: MAJ Michael G. Barger

Thesis Title: Psychological Operations Supporting Counterinsurgency: 4th PSYOP Group in Vietnam

Approved by:

_____, Thesis Committee Chair
Deborah C. Kidwell, Ph.D.

_____, Member
James H. Willbanks, Ph.D.

_____, Member
LTC Karl D. Zetmeir, MS.

Accepted this 15th day of June 2007 by:

_____, Director, Graduate Degree Programs
Robert F. Baumann, Ph.D.

The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other military organization or governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS SUPPORTING COUNTER-INSURGENCY: 4TH PSYOP GROUP IN VIETNAM, by MAJ Michael G. Barger, 143 pages.

Military and civilian agencies conducted Psychological Operations on an unprecedented scale during the Vietnam War. Emphasis on PSYOP from MACV and the U.S. Mission resulted in the creation of an interagency organization providing direction to the overall PSYOP effort. The military PSYOP force supporting MACV underwent a series of organizational changes over seven years as the force struggled to meet ever-increasing demands, but never reached their full potential in Vietnam. Difficulties in measuring effectiveness combined with a lack of understanding of PSYOP techniques and capabilities more often than not resulted in the relegation of PSYOP to supporting "sideshow" status rather than the full integration into supported unit planning necessary for success. However, the evolution of the PSYOP force and reports from participants provide numerous lessons learned applicable to current operations under the aegis of the Global war on Terrorism.

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difficulties these soldiers faced and the sacrifices they made. For those reasons, credit for

any value in this work should go to those who sacrificed most to get the message out:

*SSG Rodger E. Terwilliger, 246<sup>th</sup> PSYOP Co., Killed in Action 13 October 1966*
*SP4 Darel L. Sills, 246<sup>th</sup> PSYOP Company, Killed in Action 13 October 1966*
*11 soldiers of 6<sup>th</sup> PSYOP Bn. HQ, Wounded in VC bombing 4 December 1966*
*SSG Pedro A. Cruz, 19<sup>th</sup> PSYOP Company, Killed in Action 22 May 1967*
*SP5 William C. Gearing, Jr., 7<sup>th</sup> PSYOP Battalion, Killed in Action 19 May 1969*
*SP4 Jeremiah June, 7<sup>th</sup> PSYOP Battalion, Killed in Action 19 May 1969*
*SP4 John E. Lynch, 6<sup>th</sup> PSYOP Battalion, Killed in Action 12 June 1969*
*SP4 Gary L. Taylor, 7<sup>th</sup> PSYOP Battalion, Killed in Action 12 June 1969*
*2LT Joseph W. Spooner, 7<sup>th</sup> PSYOP Battalion, Wounded in Action 1969*
*SSG Bennie R. Wells, 6<sup>th</sup> PSYOP Battalion, Wounded in Action 1969*
*SP4 Dale L. Trammer, 6<sup>th</sup> PSYOP Battalion, Wounded in Action 1969*
*SP4 Donald L. Pett, 6<sup>th</sup> PSYOP Battalion, Wounded in Action 1969*
*SP4 R. C. Bryan, 8<sup>th</sup> PSYOP Battalion, Wounded in Action 6 April 1970*
*SP4 James Pastore, 7<sup>th</sup> PSYOP Battalion, Killed in Action 9 April 1970*

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## ACRONYMS

| | |
|---|---|
| ACTIV | Army Concept Team in Vietnam |
| APT | Armed Propaganda Team |
| ARPA | Advanced Research Projects Agency |
| ARVN | Army of the Republic of Vietnam |
| B&VA | Broadcasting and Visual Activity |
| CDEC | Combined Document Exploitation Center |
| CHP | *Chieu Hoi* (Open Arms) Program |
| CICV | Combined Intelligence Center, Vietnam |
| CINCPAC | Commander-in-Chief, Pacific |
| CMIC | Combined Military Interrogation Center |
| CORDS | Civil Operations and Revolutionary (also "Rural") Development Support |
| COMUSMACV | Commander, U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam |
| COSVN | Central Office for South Vietnam |
| CTZ | Corps Tactical Zone |
| DMZ | Demilitarized Zone |
| DRV | Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam) |
| F2F | Face to Face |
| FBIS | Foreign Broadcast Information Service |
| FF | Field Force |
| FFORCEV | Field Force Vietnam (also FFV) |
| FWMAF | Free World Military Assistance (or Armed) Forces |
| GPWD | General Political Warfare Department |

| | |
|---|---|
| GVN | Government of Vietnam (South Vietnam) |
| HES | Hamlet Evaluation System |
| JCS | Joint Chiefs of Staff |
| JUSPAO | Joint United States Public Affairs Office |
| MAAG | Military Assistance Advisory Group |
| MACCORDS | Military Assistance Command Civil Operations and Revolutionary (or Rural) Development Support |
| MACJ3-11 | Psychological Operations Directorate of the Military Assistance Command |
| MACPD | Military Assistance Command Psychological Operations Directorate |
| MACV | Military Assistance Command, Vietnam |
| MAF | Marine Amphibious Force |
| MEDCAP | Medical Civil Assistance Program |
| MICH | Ministry of Information and *Chieu Hoi* |
| MILCAP | Military Civic Action Program |
| MOI | Ministry of Information |
| MR1, 2, 3, 4 | Military Region One, Two, Three, Four |
| MTT | Mobile Training Team |
| NLF | National Liberation Front (Viet Cong) |
| NVA | North Vietnamese Army |
| OPPR | Office of Policy, Plans, and Research, JUSPAO |
| OR-LL | Operations (or Operational) Report – Lessons Learned |
| OSS | Office of Strategic Services (WW II) |
| OWI | Office of War Information (WW II) |
| PAD | Public Administration Division, USAID |

| | |
|---|---|
| PAVN | People's Army of Vietnam (North Vietnam) |
| PF | Popular Force |
| PLA/PLAF | People's Liberation Army / Armed Forces (Viet Cong) |
| POLWAR | Political Warfare |
| POD | Psychological Operations Directorate (of CORDS) |
| POW (or PW) | Prisoner of War |
| PSYACT | Psychological Action |
| PSYOP | Psychological Operations (also PSYOPS, psyops, or Psy Ops) |
| PSYWAR | Psychological Warfare |
| RD | Revolutionary (later Rural) Development |
| RF | Regional Force |
| RVN | Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam) |
| RVNAF | Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (South Vietnam) |
| SFG | Special Forces Group |
| SVN | South Vietnam |
| TA | Target Audience |
| TAOR | Tactical Area of Responsibility |
| TDY | Temporary duty |
| TOE | Table of Organization and Equipment |
| USABVAPAC | US Army Broadcasting and Visual Activity Pacific |
| USAID | United States Agency for International Development |
| USARV | United States Army, Vietnam |
| USIA | United States Information Agency |
| USIS | United States Information Service |

| | |
|---|---|
| USMACV | U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam |
| USSFV | United States Special Forces, Vietnam |
| VC | Viet Cong |
| VCI | Viet Cong Infrastructure |
| VIS | Vietnamese Information Service (South Vietnam) |
| VN | Vietnam or Vietnamese |
| VNAF | Vietnamese Air Force (South Vietnam) |
| VOA | Voice of America |
| VOF | Voice of Freedom |
| VTVN | Vietnam National Radio |

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CHAPTER 1

LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a wide array of published source material that covers combat operations in Vietnam and many works focus on operational and tactical-level military operations. Many of these discuss psychological operations (PSYOP) in passing, noting how PSYOP supported a particular project or operation, but few concentrate on PSYOP. In fact, only seven published works examine a significant issue related to PSYOP in depth, only three of those are studies devoted specifically on PSYOP, and only one of those three concentrates on the military portion of the PSYOP effort in Vietnam. All seven of the sources mentioned generally agree on the effectiveness of specific aspects of the overall PSYOP effort in Vietnam, although the authors sometimes offer different causes of success or failure. More importantly, most of the seven principal works draw from generally the same primary sources. However, some primary sources not available to these earlier works are now in the public domain. These new sources do not change what seems to be a consensus on PSYOP effectiveness in Vietnam, but they do provide additional depth to the search for reasons explaining the success or failure of the overall PSYOP effort in general and military PSYOP in particular.

The one available source that focuses on military PSYOP is a general history of U.S. military PSYOP by Stanley Sandler. *Cease Resistance*[1] devotes one long chapter covering PSYOP in Vietnam and as the most recently published of the seven works mentioned, cites most of the primary sources currently available. Sandler's overall conclusions regarding PSYOP effectiveness follow the consensus of other sources, generally concluding that some PSYOP programs were highly effective, some met with

mixed success, and others were of only limited value. However, like most other authors, Sandler does not address the problems of PSYOP integration into tactical combat operations. He also does not evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of General Westmoreland's emphasis on PSYOP, which resulted in a large PSYOP effort focused on the means of delivering messages that were marginally effective but easily measurable. The resultant dispersion of effort and an over reliance on leaflets and other print products is evident in other primary and secondary sources either not considered or not available to Sandler.

Two other works concentrate on PSYOP in Vietnam, but they differ from Sandler in placing more emphasis on PSYOP efforts by the United States Information Service (USIS) and the Joint U.S. Public Affairs Office (JUSPAO) and less emphasis on purely military PSYOP efforts. In *War of Ideas*,[2] Lieutenant Colonel Robert W. Chandler balances his treatment between military and civilian PSYOP, giving a better picture of the integration of USIS, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and military PSYOP officers as well as the direction of the overall PSYOP effort by JUSPAO. Like Sandler, Chandler clearly shows examples of the shortcomings of JUSPAO in coordinating the enormous and varied countrywide PSYOP effort.  Sandler draws from declassified source material not available to Chandler, whose work was published more than ten years earlier. However, Chandler's work actually has more depth because his work is devoted entirely to PSYOP in Vietnam, while Sandler's is a more general long-term history of military PSYOP.

Lieutenant Colonel Harry D. Latimer's *U.S. Psychological Operations in Vietnam*[3] focuses exclusively on civilian PSYOP, primarily because he was one of the

military PSYOP officers assigned to JUSPAO. While his work provides insight into the inner working of JUSPAO, the omission of detail regarding the military PSYOP effort limits his work's usefulness. However, Latimer's account provides balance to the criticisms leveled at JUSPAO by Sandler and Chandler and provides insight into the role of JUSPAO in providing overall direction to the PSYOP effort in Vietnam.

Richard A. Hunt's *Pacification*,[4] while not a direct study of PSYOP in Vietnam, focuses on a number of programs inextricably entwined with the PSYOP effort. Hunt extensively covers the *Chieu Hoi* amnesty program, but treats it as one of the many pacification programs aimed at winning the loyalty of the rural Vietnamese population. Since the *Chieu Hoi* program targeted Viet Cong (VC) and North Vietnamese Army (NVA) combatants, it was a separate program from the pacification effort. Hunt also fails to consider *Chieu Hoi* as a psychological operation in and of itself although his description of the program makes it clear that *Chieu Hoi* was an effective psychological action. Like other authors, Hunt does not highlight the relationship between the effectiveness of PSYOP supporting *Chieu Hoi* and the effectiveness of the program itself. In other words, if *Chieu Hoi* had not actually accomplished what it set out to do, *Chieu Hoi* appeals from PSYOP teams would never have been credible among those they sought to influence.

Of the four works already mentioned, all allude to the importance of a thorough understanding of PSYOP target audiences. However, only Chandler and Sandler explore the cultural differences between Vietnamese and Americans, and these do not go to any great depth. Michael Lanning and Dan Cragg's *Inside the VC and the NVA*[5] provides additional insight that highlights some of the reasons why *Chieu Hoi* was effective.

Douglas Pike's *PAVN* [6] also provides detail in this area, but Lanning and Cragg's work is more useful in describing the Vietnamese cultural traits that *Chieu Hoi* exploited as well as the measures VC and NVA leaders took to counter the effectiveness of *Chieu Hoi* appeals. This may be due in part to the fact that Lanning and Cragg draw heavily from interviews conducted with *Chieu Hoi* returnees.

Ron McLaurin, editor of *Military Propaganda*,[7] provides much information but his analysis yields no new insights not covered by other authors. McLaurin has drawn for this work from his earlier *The Art and Science of Psychological Operations*,[8] a two-volume set published by the Department of the Army. Both works are collections of essays on general and theoretical PSYOP topics as well as a few specific essays on Vietnam. While useful, there is much extraneous data of little value, essays lack extensive documentation, and the organization of both works makes finding useful information difficult.

Periodical sources available provided information on the Chieu Hoi program and on Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF) Political Warfare (POLWAR) organization and activities. *Military Review* published the bulk of these between 1967 and 1972. While useful, the articles, by their nature, lack the depth of analysis available in published works. Therefore, their usefulness is primarily to confirm facts covered with better depth elsewhere, especially in primary sources.

Beyond the seven works focusing on aspects of PSYOP already mentioned, there is much secondary source material that addresses PSYOP in the context of other operations. While this information lacks the context of the wider PSYOP effort, it does provide insights into PSYOP force employment. Also, when secondary source treatment

is compared to primary source material such as reports from units in the field, it gives indication of how PSYOP rarely integrated fully into military combat operations until the later years of the war. Therefore, the usefulness of secondary source materials such as the Vietnam Studies series is primarily as a counterpoint to primary source materials from PSYOP units and the tactical units they supported. By comparing these sources, it becomes clear that PSYOP was often under-utilized or misused by combat commanders.

Vietnam is unique for the exceptionally large scope of PSYOP activities in comparison to previous conflicts. It is also unique in the number and quality of studies undertaken to measure PSYOP effectiveness. Numerous small-scale studies were undertaken during the course of the war, along with two large-scale studies of which the second is the most significant. The Army Concept Team in Vietnam (ACTIV) conducted the first large-scale study between 1 December 1968 and 31 March 1969[9]. The ACTIV report was significant in that they found the then-recent expansion of the PSYOP force structure from a battalion with four companies to a group with four battalions to be barely adequate to meet all of the tasks PSYOP was required to complete. In addition to their recommendation for further expansion of the PSYOP forces in Vietnam, the ACTIV team came to the unusual conclusion that the lack of standardization of PSYOP staff organizations across the country was a good thing. Acknowledging the difficulties in organization, cooperation, and duplication of effort experienced by PSYOP commanders, the ACTIV team report did not recommend any solutions and downplayed the difficulties of PSYOP command structure and mission planning such as focus on spurious tasks and lack of commander's emphasis. Their report also deferred a detailed examination of PSYOP effectiveness for later, citing the difficulties involved in measuring effectiveness.

A later study undertaken by Ernest F. and Edith M. Bairdain[10] from September 1969 to January 1971 delved more deeply into several of the topics the ACTIV report did not cover. This 16-month study of both military and civilian PSYOP in Vietnam involved numerous researchers, analysts, and data processors and resulted in an interim report, a two-volume final report, and twenty special-purpose reports covering specific topic areas. This study is the standard reference cited by all later authors examining the effectiveness of PSYOP in Vietnam. Further, this study provides key supporting data for the assertion that combat unit staffs in Vietnam often failed to integrate military PSYOP forces into tactical operations. The Bairdains' study, for example, shows that it took on average two years of exposure to *Chieu Hoi* appeals to convince a VC soldier to rally while appeals combined with combat operations produced immediate results. That this did not routinely happen until later years of the war is an important indicator that combat commanders saw PSYOP as more of a sideshow than a valuable combat multiplier.

Another study, completed by Andrew D. Sens and Joseph M. Macrum in 1965 for the Special Operations Research Office (SORO),[11] is not a study of PSYOP effectiveness but rather is an argument for employing PSYOP in Vietnam. This study provides context for the buildup of PSYOP forces begun in 1965. A study conducted after the war by BDM Corporation[12] lacks the level of detail on PSYOP of other reports, but provides evidence that some PSYOP programs were effective while others were not. However, the ACTIV and Bairdain reports have stronger evidence value than the SORO and BDM reports because the former were conducted with the participation of the military PSYOP forces themselves as they were in action.

Possibly the most persuasive documents alluding to the effectiveness of particular PSYOP programs were those captured from VC and NVA forces during combat operations[13] and the transcripts of interrogations conducted with prisoners of war and ralliers[14] who returned under the *Chieu Hoi* program. Similarly persuasive and useful evidence is available in the form of lessons learned and debriefing reports written by PSYOP commanders.

PSYOP headquarters of battalion or larger size submitted quarterly Operational Report-Lessons Learned (OR-LL) through MACV for distribution at Department of the Army level. Sandler considered a few of these reports but no other author had access and even Sandler did not have access to all of the reports available today. The wealth of detailed information in these reports ranges from trivial to crucial and supporting facts for every significant assertion regarding PSYOP effectiveness can be found here. The largely untapped reports from PSYOP commanders reinforce similar reports from the 1st Infantry Division[15] and 5th Special Forces Group,[16] providing additional data supporting the assertion that PSYOP was overwhelmed by demands for easily measurable actions but handicapped in effectively integrating into combat operations.

In addition to PSYOP and combat unit OR-LL reports, some end-of-tour debriefing reports from senior officers departing Vietnam provide their perspectives and some of the knowledge they had gained in their assignment. Debriefs from two commanders of 4th PSYOP Group[17] and one commander of 7th PSYOP Group[18] provide the unique perspectives of PSYOP commanders, while debriefs from general officers commanding from separate brigade to corps provide the perspective of these officers as

to what PSYOP was doing in support of their units and their emphasis on PSYOP in planning for tactical missions.

While lessons learned and debriefing reports provide insight into PSYOP and tactical unit procedures, the best source for information on the decisions made regarding PSYOP at Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) are the annual command history reports now available in declassified form. Other MACV documents provide useful details, for example the handbook providing every conceivable detail on the employment of Vietnamese Armed Propaganda Teams.[19] As important as the MACV command histories and other documents are to understanding decisions made at that level, the many guidance documents published by JUSPAO are crucial to understanding some of the constraints placed on military PSYOP forces. Consolidated copies of all early and most later guidance documents are available.[20] Since U.S. Army PSYOP forces were under the operational control of MACV and constrained by the directive guidance published by JUSPAO, understanding the policies and processes in these two organizations provides insight into why PSYOP forces organized and operated in certain ways.

Vietnam was the first war that saw the U.S. Army with an active PSYOP force with a well-developed doctrine. In all previous conflicts, the force structure and doctrine both were built almost from scratch. Understanding this doctrine provides insight into the organization of forces as they deployed as well as the evolutionary process of reorganization that military PSYOP underwent over the course of the war. Two doctrinal manuals, the 1968 edition of Field Manual 33-1[21] and the 1966 edition of Field Manual 33-5,[22] are important to understanding the cellular organization used at the war's

beginning. In addition, these documents clarify OR-LL entries that highlight efforts by the military PSYOP units to reorganize to create the capabilities lacking in the doctrinal cellular structure.

The many sources consulted for this study all tend to agree in their conclusions regarding PSYOP effectiveness in Vietnam, but minor disagreements arise in determining why PSYOP was effective or why it was not. All PSYOP studies published after the war draw from the ACTIV and Bairdain studies done during the war, and their conclusions do not vary much. However, examination of primary sources, especially sources only recently made available, leads to new conclusions about the causes of PSYOP effectiveness or lack thereof. For one, the failure of combat units to integrate PSYOP fully into their plans was a serious limiting factor on PSYOP effectiveness. Second, the emphasis on PSYOP from MACV only forced PSYOP to integrate in form but not in substance. Finally, PSYOP was most effective when combined with actions, either military operations or substantive, effective programs. This examination provides lessons clearly applicable to current U.S. Army operations underway in Iraq and Afghanistan and better show how PSYOP can and should integrate into and support combat units in a counterinsurgency environment.

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CHAPTER 2

SETTING THE STAGE: 1954-1965

The United Stated has practiced psychological operations (PSYOP) since the

American Revolution, and each succeeding conflict since has seen an increase in attempts

to use psychological means to achieve objectives. The military PSYOP effort in Vietnam

was, in terms of personnel and budget, larger than any preceding U.S. effort, but the

results of this effort were only moderately effective. The causes for this are many, as are

the reasons why the effort should have been more effective. General factors, such as

military PSYOP objectives, methods used, and constraints placed on their activities, all

influenced their ultimate effectiveness. However, some causes precede the introduction of

military PSYOP forces to South Vietnam in 1965. Two such factors were the evolution of

military and civilian PSYOP organizations following World War II and the changing

U.S. Mission in Vietnam after the departure of the French in 1954. Moreover, the

programs supported by PSYOP all predated the arrival of military PSYOP units.

Additionally, the effectiveness of U.S. PSYOP efforts had much to do with the culture,

values, and motivations of the targets of that effort, the population of South Vietnam, and

the combatants from North and South who fought there. Finally, the structural evolution

of PSYOP forces, from the arrival of the 1st Provisional Detachment in August 1965 to

the departure of the 7th PSYOP Battalion in December 1971, influenced the effectiveness

of PSYOP as a part of the total U.S. effort in South East Asia.

U.S. civilian and military PSYOP organizations in Vietnam evolved in the years

during and after World War II. Although the U.S. had used psychological efforts, such as

propaganda and military deception, in prior conflicts, it was only after World War II that

PSYOP organizations and practices persisted past the termination of hostilities. Actually, the term PSYOP evolved during the war from psychological warfare (PSYWAR), the term used beginning in 1940. Whatever the term used, a significant weakness to U.S. efforts during the war was that there was no single organization responsible for PSYOP.[1] Rather, several military and civilian entities saw a need for PSYWAR capabilities; all developed their own organization and practices, and the subsequent rivalry between these groups influenced how these organizations evolved in the postwar period.[2]

The lack of unity of effort for PSYWAR during World War II resulted in jurisdictional battles between the Office of War Information (OWI), the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), and the U.S. Army. Within each theater of operation, commanders either addressed the rivalries organizationally, or ignored the rivalries to the detriment of the overall effort. In Europe, General Eisenhower created the Psychological Warfare Division, Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force, integrating the various U.S. agencies, as well as their British counterparts, into one effective, unified organization. Leaders in the Pacific did not do as well. Admiral Halsey in the South Pacific Area simply denied clearance for operations to both the OSS and OWI. General McArthur in the Southwest Pacific chose the side of OWI over the OSS, but placed OWI in a subordinate role to his military staff. These wartime rivalries continued to a lesser extent after the war concluded, as each agency transformed into those involved in Vietnam in 1954.[3]

OWI evolved into the United States Information Agency (USIA) established by President Eisenhower on 3 August 1953. Unfortunately, the new agency was not able to retain the title United States Information Service (USIS), which OWI had used from its

inception in 1942, as the U.S. Immigration Service already used that designation. Therefore, members of the organization used USIA inside the United States and USIS overseas. Nevertheless, the mission of USIA stated in President Eisenhower's directive issued 22 October 1953 was to "tell America's story abroad."[4] During the Korean War's last year, USIS began conducting PSYOP in support of national objectives, establishing a precedent for their later activities in South Vietnam.[5]

The evolution of OSS into the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) was less direct than the transformation of OWI into USIA. Disbanded in September 1945, OSS became the Strategic Services Unit of the War Department. In mid-1946, the unit transferred to the new Central Intelligence Group, which became the CIA in 1947.[6] Although psychological warfare functions were a relatively small part of the CIA, as they were a small part of OSS, the personnel with wartime experience remained throughout the transformation process. It is therefore no surprise that the CIA initiated the first U.S. PSYOP advisory effort conducted in Vietnam.

The CIA assigned Colonel Edward G. Lansdale, United States Air Force (USAF) to the Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) Indochina in early 1954 to provide advice to the G-5 (Psychological Warfare) staff of the Vietnamese Army. From his previous experience, four years advising counterinsurgency operations in the Philippines, Colonel Lansdale well understood the importance of PSYOP. He found the Vietnamese psychological warfare capabilities far superior to those he had seen in the Philippines, but the Vietnamese lacked an effective planning organization to direct their propaganda efforts. Colonel Lansdale also observed that the Vietnamese perceived the Communists under Ho Chi Minh to be the only force seeking independence from the French, because

the Government of Vietnam (GVN) was making no real effort to capture the nationalist sentiment or ideological support of their own population.[7]

While CIA can claim the first PSYOP advisory effort in Vietnam, USIS undertook the first actual psychological operation there, a covert anticommunist rumor campaign conducted in both the North and South of Vietnam in 1954 during the transition from French rule. Later, USIS provided advisory and material support to the GVN propaganda effort and coordinated military training assistance. Overt persuasion efforts by USIS also gradually intensified up to mid-1965, but those efforts remained relatively modest compared to the scale of effort that began in the latter half of 1965.[8]

In the years following French departure, MAAG (later Military Assistance Command, Vietnam or MACV), USIS, and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) each undertook their own PSYOP effort in Vietnam.[9] Since each organization operated independently of one another, there was no central coordinating authority to the psychological operations effort. Not only did the various agencies fail to complement one another, duplication of effort and lack of coordination resulted in fragmented support to the GVN and a disjointed, contradictory, and ineffective U.S. effort. For example, USAID was responsible for providing materiel to USIS[10], but because they did not coordinate, the projectors and recorders USAID provided were incompatible with the films and tapes USIS produced.[11]

The uncoordinated nature of MACV, USIS, and USAID psychological operations clearly demonstrated the need for an organization to provide overall direction and avoid both competition and duplication of effort. In addition, since the military component of the U.S. PSYOP effort was subordinate to the civilian PSYOP structure, it is important to

understand how the civilian PSYOP structure evolved. Interestingly, the organization created to correct these problems was neither a civilian nor a military entity but both, combining elements of USAID and MACV under the direction of USIS.[12]

Carl Rowan, the Director of USIA, and the Army Chief of Staff, General Harold K. Johnson, observed the difficulties and inefficiencies of the uncoordinated PSYOP effort in March 1965, during a joint visit to Vietnam.[13] Afterward, both men recommended to President Johnson that he integrate foreign information and PSYOP activities into a single office combining elements of USIS, MACV, and USAID.[14] The President approved these recommendations, creating the Joint U.S. Public Affairs Office (JUSPAO). The U.S. Embassy in Vietnam announced the formation of JUSPAO in U.S. Embassy Instruction VN 186 on 14 May 1965.[15]

The USIS director in GVN, Mr. Barry Zorthian, was assigned both as the initial Director of JUSPAO and Minister-Counselor for Information of the American Embassy, Saigon. He was well qualified for the post, with previous experience as Deputy Director of USIS in New Delhi, India and as a scriptwriter and program manager for the Voice of America (VOA). He was a veteran of World War II and held the rank of Colonel in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve at the time of his appointment as JUSPAO director. He therefore seemed to be a good choice to integrate civilian and military personnel into an effective combined staff.[16]

President Johnson created JUSPAO as an agency of the U.S. Mission to Vietnam, the largest U.S. Mission in existence at the time. The Mission's structure reflected lessons learned from experience with counterinsurgency in Europe and Asia. Chief among these lessons was, according to a JUSAPO Briefing Book, that defending and building a nation

required the integration of the military, political, economic, and psychological dimensions of action.[17] As they recognized the importance of the psychological dimension of counterinsurgency and nation building, it was not unusual for U.S. Mission personnel to create an organization to supervise the psychological dimension. With the formation of JUSPAO, the U.S. Mission comprised the following elements: the Embassy (for political action), MACV (the military component), USAID (for economic action), JUSPAO (for psychological action), and the Mission Press Center (for media relations).[18]

As JUSPAO director, Zorthian's official title was U.S. Mission Coordinator for Psychological Operations and his responsibilities included developing PSYOP guidance for all U.S. elements in South Vietnam (SVN). Therefore, the intended purpose of JUSPAO was not just to de-conflict and coordinate the activities of the various involved agencies, but also to plan an overall PSYOP strategy, in which each of those agencies would play a part. As an entity of the U.S. Mission, JUSPAO derived authority from the ambassador, so once he approved JUSPAO guidance it had the authority of the highest-ranking U.S. official in Vietnam.[19]

While JUSPAO was a part of the U.S. Mission to South Vietnam, the organization had assigned responsibilities that extended across international borders. Since JUSPAO was responsible for PSYOP in North and South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, the organization's perspective extended into what today's doctrine defines as strategic PSYOP.[20] Within the borders of South Vietnam, JUSPAO did not restrict itself to supervisory authority at the Vietnamese national level, what current PSYOP doctrine terms operational level PSYOP. JUSPAO field representatives at the region and province level were also responsible for the coordination of PSYOP activities by all agencies

within their areas of responsibility, extending JUSPAO control over PSYOP to the tactical level.[21] The task of coordinating PSYOP activities at the province level was considerably more difficult that at national level because province field officers were relatively junior in rank as well as experience and the many activities in a province could easily overwhelm the small JUSPAO staffs there. While later events indicated that lower-level JUSPAO representatives encountered great difficulty attempting to control PSYOP in their areas, the operations aimed at winning heats and minds at the province level were arguably more important than those at the national level.[22]

The 44 provinces of South Vietnam varied considerably in population (ranging from 37,000 to nearly one million) and characteristics (ethnic and regional differences and rural versus urban differences, for example). Therefore, the generalized messages designed to appeal to everyone at the national level could almost never be as effective as appeals personalized to fit the point of view of a particular province's population. According to one U.S. Army PSYOP officer assigned to work with JUSPAO, "the fulcrum of our psychological operations effort" was at the local level, where province PSYOP officers tailored national-level PSYOP themes to the region, province, or locality.[23]

As the USIS, USAID, and military officers sent to fill the ranks of JUSPAO integrated in their assigned positions, a disparity began to emerge. Because the agencies lacked enough officers experienced in the nuances of Vietnamese culture to fill all required positions, JUSPAO assigned more experienced officers to positions with national-level responsibilities rather than to provincial positions. USIS personnel, with over a decade of experience conducting PSYOP in the country, had the bulk of the

practical experience available in 1965. The U.S. Army, with the responsibility to begin

fielding PSYOP units in Vietnam in addition to the military positions in JUSPAO it was

responsible to fill, found itself critically short of qualified PSYOP officers.[24] It therefore

had to rely on USIS to provide the expertise on how to overcome the cultural differences

between Americans and Vietnamese necessary for effective PSYOP.

Although USIS retained the bulk of experienced personnel, it does not necessarily

follow that these personnel had a complete or thorough understanding of Vietnamese

culture. In fact, valuable as the experience USIS personnel brought to JUSPAO was, it

was not enough to prevent all misunderstandings. From the start, JUSPAO personnel

learned more from the results of failed efforts or policies than from the sage advice of

seasoned professionals in their ranks.[25] Later the same year, U.S. Army PSYOP forces

began learning the same lessons in the same manner. This is primarily because influential

communication is difficult enough to accomplish when you understand the culture and

language of your target. It is exponentially more difficult when the culture and language

of the target is different from those of the communicator.

Effective, persuasive communication requires an understanding of the target

audience--those you are setting out to influence. In tactical terms, launching an effective

psychological attack requires knowing the psychological terrain the attack must cross.

For the Americans arriving in Vietnam, gaining an understanding of this psychological

terrain was difficult because the differences between Vietnamese and Americans were

rather significant. USAF Lieutenant Colonel Robert Chandler, a Vietnam veteran,

described the problem this way:

Many Westerners experienced "culture shock" when they first visited Indochina. Vietnamese and American societies were vastly different in almost every important aspect--race, language, outlook on life, and ways of doing things. Indeed, the cultural gap separating the two peoples was probably as great as that between any two societies in the world. This chasm had to be bridged in order for the Americans to communicate effectively with the Vietnamese. The success of U.S. psychological operations largely depended on it.[26]

Although the cultural gap was in fact wide, it was not impossible to bridge. In addition to the experienced USIS personnel, U.S. Army PSYOP personnel arriving in 1965 had numerous sources of cultural information available to them. For example, U.S. State Department Background Notes distributed by U.S. Mission offices summarized some important general population characteristics, pointing out that the Vietnamese had a recorded history of over 2,000 years that showed them to be among the most vigorous people in Asia, displaying remarkable drive and energy. Other important characteristics highlighted include Vietnam's history of Chinese occupation, and the resultant strong sense of national identity.[27] Internal JUSPAO documents provided even greater depth of both information and analysis. One document, for example, explained the importance most Vietnamese placed on regional origin, a trait responsible for the difficulty in translating feelings of national identity into feelings of national unity.[28] This deep Vietnamese affinity for their region of origin influenced attitudes toward those from other regions and implied some of the potential difficulties JUSPAO faced in creating national-level PSYOP campaigns.

Religion, either Buddhism or Roman Catholicism, and Confucian philosophy also played significant roles in Vietnamese life.[29] Of the two, JUSPAO analysts rightly considered the second as more significant to PSYOP efforts. Confucianism, a product of Chinese subjugation, greatly shaped the perceptions of the Vietnamese, prescribing rules

of conduct as well as attitudes and social biases. For example, following the Confucian view that harmony is the source of good leads logically to the conclusion that lack of harmony leads to evil, so it is best to find a harmonious middle ground between extremes.[30] Striving for this harmonious balance created in the Vietnamese a strong trait of adaptability, but to GVN and U.S. personnel attempting to instill a sense of national ideology and allegiance in the Vietnamese, this same adaptability was a significant obstacle. In fact, it proved difficult to convince a rural Vietnamese that he or she should place their allegiance with <u>any</u> single government. According to one PSYOP study conducted in 1965, "adjustment of principles to a given situation, rather than firm adherence to immutable principle" was a trait seen as admirable, so the Vietnamese would give their loyalty to whatever government seemed to be in control on any given day.[31]

Although Vietnamese cultural traits seem to impose insurmountable obstacles to persuasion, this is not entirely the case. In fact, Vietnamese culture provided some opportunities for effective PSYOP programs that probably would have been less effective in other cultures. For example, the *Chieu Hoi* (Open Arms) program, established by President Diem on 17 April 1963, was an offer of amnesty and forgiveness that western cultures and even Vietnamese officials found difficult to support. However, the program proved effective in reducing Viet Cong (VC) strength, in part because it cast the GVN in the role of a benevolent and forgiving father or older sibling, powerful imagery to family-oriented Vietnamese.[32] Further, the program followed through on this image by providing vocational training, opportunities to reunite with family members, and a route back to citizenship and, nominally at least, acceptance back into society.

The *Chieu Hoi* program, intended to persuade members of the VC and North

Vietnamese Army (NVA) to rally (rather than surrender) to the GVN, patterned itself on

the successful surrender program used in the Philippines. Such programs weaken enemy

forces directly, through the loss of individual soldiers, and indirectly through reduction in

morale and by causing "dissension and distrust" in their ranks.[33] In addition, *Chieu Hoi*

provided means to gather useful first-hand intelligence and promote a firm but benevolent

image of GVN. However, problems between 1963 and 1965 limited the program's

overall effectiveness. For instance, the Diem government's reluctance to compromise

with political opponents hampered efforts to project the image of forgiveness essential to

attracting large numbers of ralliers. In addition, the program had little or no high-level

GVN interest or emphasis and personnel turnover was high as a result. Despite this,

*Chieu Hoi* did show promise, attracting 11,248 ralliers (*Hoi Chanh*) in 1963, 5,417 in

1964, and 3,192 in the first six months of 1965.[34]

JUSPAO recognized the potential of the *Chieu Hoi* program and set out to revive

it as one of their first priorities. As U.S. Army PSYOP units began arriving in Vietnam.

they began to promote *Chieu Hoi* as a matter of course while supporting military

operations. PSYOP units soon began to use *Hoi Chanh* to design personalized *Chieu Hoi*

appeals. A number of *Hoi Chanh* volunteered for service on an Armed Propaganda Team

(APT) to venture into contested areas and provide personal testimonials on the realities of

*Chieu Hoi*.[35] However, Chieu Hoi was not the only program military PSYOP forces

would support. A number of other programs, collectively known as pacification

programs, had been underway for years and would become, for better or for worse,

centerpieces of the PSYOP effort to win Vietnamese hearts and minds. In fact, until the

formation of the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS)

office in 1967, JUSPAO had operational and coordination authority for pacification

programs.[36]

Unlike the *Chieu Hoi* program, which at least had some qualified successes, early

attempts to initiate and maintain workable pacification programs were collectively

inauspicious. The theory behind pacification efforts was to combine military and civilian

efforts to provide security and foster economic and social reforms with the end goal of

winning the loyalty of the population.[37] Vietnamese President Diem's first half-hearted

attempt at pacification was a relocation program intended to protect the rural population

by moving them into strong settlements called *agrovilles*. Begun in 1959, poor planning,

corruption, and mismanagement by the GVN administration along with VC infiltration

and sabotage doomed the *agroville* program to failure. The strategic hamlet program,

more ambitious in scale but as equally flawed as the *agroville* program, began in 1961.

Modest U.S. monetary support and Vietnamese corruption, exacerbated by the failure of

Vietnamese administrators in Saigon to understand the rural population ultimately

resulted in the failure of the strategic hamlet program.[38]

Diem's assassination on 2 November 1963, and the instability that followed it,

seriously undermined all of the pacification programs that were underway. The GVN

officially abandoned the strategic hamlet program in early 1964 while General Nguyen

Khanh and his government searched for a program that would reverse recent VC gains

across the countryside. With advice from JUSPAO and MACV, Khanh's government

instituted the *Chien Thang* (Will to Victory) program that, though intended to avoid the

mistakes of the strategic hamlet program, still ultimately failed for similar reasons. *Chien*

*Thang* was faltering in May 1964 when Khanh's government unveiled the *Hop Tac*

(Victory) program. Both *Chien Thang* and *Hop Tac* failed due to the inability of the

Vietnamese military, paramilitary, and police to provide security in addition to the failure

of the Vietnamese government to gain grass roots support for any pacification efforts.

The result of this series of failed pacification efforts was a general conviction in the U.S.

Mission and MACV that the idea of pacification itself was failing and nothing short of a

massive intervention by U.S. ground and air forces would be required to retrieve the

situation in Vietnam.[39] Similar feelings about the lack of progress in the U.S. Army

PSYOP advisory effort guaranteed that U.S. Army PSYOP units would accompany this

massive intervention.

The U.S. Army PSYOP advisory that preceded the arrival of full-capability

PSYOP units began on 27 April 1960 when the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific

(CINCPAC) first directed the deployment of psychological warfare (PSYWAR)

personnel to Vietnam. The first Mobile Training Team (MTT) arrived in February 1962

but advisory efforts made little headway for over a year, primarily due to skepticism on

the part of GVN officials under President Diem. One side effect of the 1 November 1963

coup d'etat was a change in some attitudes in the RVNAF about the importance of

psychological operations, but some in MACV attributed this to have been in equal

measure a response to the successes enjoyed by the VC at about the same time.[40]

The commander and staff of MACV placed great emphasis on PSYOP from the

planning stages of the troop buildup in 1965. One reason for this, in addition to the

perceived failure of PSYOP advisory efforts, was the agreed division of responsibilities

between MACV and JUSPAO. This agreement specified that MACV would execute

PSYOP in the field and provide print capability to JUSPAO, so MACV planners

requested the addition of units with these capabilities to the troop buildup.[41]

However, the strong emphasis MACV placed on using psychological operations

to achieve objectives had some unintended effects that limited how PSYOP forces were

employed. General Westmoreland, the MACV commanding general, personally

emphasized the use of PSYOP among his staff and to the commanders of U.S. combat

units. General Westmoreland clearly indicated his emphasis on PSYOP when he

described his support for the formation of JUSPAO:

> I considered the psychological effort so important that I provided
> extensive support to Mr. Zorthian in the form of military personnel, units, and
> facilities. The armed Services, particularly the Army, also furnished over 120
> specially trained officers to work with USIA and the Vietnamese Information
> Service at province and district level.[42]

Because General Westmoreland and his staff appreciated and encouraged the use of

PSYOP, U.S. Army PSYOP units would deploy and operate in Vietnam in unprecedented

numbers compared to previous conflicts. The *MACV 1965 Command History* describes

the "marked interest throughout the US Mission in full exploitation of all psychological

opportunities," which highlighted the critical nature of General Westmoreland's emphasis

in the decision to deploy U.S. Army PSYOP forces. One instrument used to communicate

and encourage this "marked interest" in PSYOP was USMACV Directive 525-3, dated 7

September 1965, "which emphasized discrimination in the application of firepower and

the use of all available psyops resources" in combat operations.[43] However, many in the

GVN and many unit commanders subordinate to MACV lacked a similar confidence in

PSYOP.[44] As a result, although it was not evident in the troop buildup during 1965, over

time these forces sometimes found themselves marginalized by tactical commanders.

The initial forces for deployment to Vietnam were drawn either from the ranks of the 7th PSYOP Group, based in Okinawa, or from stateside units, for the most part those stationed at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. According to official order of battle records, elements of the 7th PSYOP Group totaling 143 soldiers conducted psychological operations in Vietnam between 20 October 1965 and 1 December 1967, and additional elements continued to perform missions in Vietnam throughout the war.[45]

The First (Provisional) PSYOP Field Support Detachment was probably the first functional PSYOP unit to arrive in Vietnam.[46] Temporary duty (TDY) orders issued on 22 July 1965 by the U.S. Army Broadcasting and Visual Activity Pacific (USABVAPAC) give instructions to report to the Vietnam Detachment, USABVAPAC no later than 1 August 1965 for a period of approximately 90 days, under the operational control of MACV. The detachment's roster listed two Captains, John A. Hardaway and Michael C. Deprie, as well as five lieutenants. Presumably, Captain Hardaway commanded the detachment as his name appears first on the order.[47]

Another of the units deployed as part of the initial PSYOP force was the 24th PSYWAR detachment, commanded by Captain Blaine Revis. It was formed at Fort Bragg, North Carolina from members of the 1st and 13th PSYWAR Battalions and the 3rd and 6th Special Forces Groups on 18 July 1965, with an authorized strength of seven officers and twenty-one soldiers. The detachment had only two weeks to train before deployment, spent 23 days crossing the Pacific Ocean on the USS William H. Gordon, and arrived in Qui Nhon in September, 1965. On 2 September the detachment was re-designated the 24th PSYOP Detachment (USARPAC). Upon linking up with the 1st Cavalry Division at An Khe, the detachment was initially assigned to the Division G-5

(Civil Affairs) but later transferred to the G-3 (Operations) section where they found more use in their doctrinal role. In November, 1965, the detachment moved to Nha Trang where they were assigned to the II Corps G-3 and in February, 1966 the detachment was redesignated the 245th PSYOP Company.[48]

A report from the 5th Special Forces Group (SFG) summarizing activities in the last quarter of 1965 provides insight into how the MACV command emphasis on PSYOP began to impact the newly-arriving PSYOP forces. Citing staff visits, commander's conferences, and briefings originating from MACV, the report calls PSYOP "the most important aspect of our operations." It also cites the increased responsiveness of "U.S. Army psywar detachments" that reduced the time needed for large-quantity leaflet production from three weeks to 36 hours. The 5th SFG distributed "over two million leaflets and more than 150,000 publications" during the quarter covered by this report, an enormous effort by any previous measure that, as other U.S. units began to follow suit, began to overwhelm the capabilities of available PSYOP units.[49]

To alleviate the burden on the small initial PSYOP force, MACV requested increased numbers of PSYOP units and equipment. The MACV request for deployment of the 6th PSYOP Battalion to provide personnel and logistics support as well as command and control for PSYOP forces, was approved by the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) in December 1965. MACV intended the deployment of the 6th PSYOP Battalion as the culmination of the gradual buildup of PSYOP detachments introduced concurrently with U.S. combat units, bringing the total number of personnel assigned to the PSYOP effort in Vietnam to nearly 500. MACV planners did not yet see that even this increase in capability would be inadequate to meet the needs their emphasis on PSYOP would create.

Other stated goals of the increase in PSYOP forces were "to provide a major stimulus to the overall US/GVN PSYOP program and to insure that US tactical units were provided adequate and timely PSYOP support."[50]

With the advanced elements of the 6th PSYOP Battalion beginning to arrive at the end of 1965, military PSYOP seemed poised for significant accomplishments. Given the emphasis placed on PSYOP by MACV, and the fact that this would be the first U.S. war where a PSYOP force structure and doctrine existed at the outset rather than being built from scratch, the situation looked hopeful.[51] While PSYOP soldiers were new to the region, they had the experience of USIS officers to guide them. Although there was some concern that the recent formation of JUSPAO had the potential to create military-civilian friction, the example of civil-military cooperation provided by MACV mitigated those concerns.[52] In addition, the Dominican Republic intervention earlier in 1965 provided a clear success in interagency PSYOP, as the 1st Psychological Warfare Battalion demonstrated how military PSYOP and civilian USIS planners could cooperate to good effect in a crisis.[53]

However, some of the roots of problems that would prove to be more significant in the future were already starting to show. The U.S. Army had to correct shortages in qualified PSYOP personnel to build and sustain an effective PSYOP force structure. Failures of pacification efforts should have alerted U.S. planners to some of the difficulties they would face, but officials discounted failures as results of endemic factors within Vietnamese government, military, or society. There was a prevalent feeling among the Americans in Vietnam, civilian and military, that we could do better. The influx of U.S. PSYOP forces, along with the combat forces that continued to arrive in ever-greater

numbers, provided the means necessary to do so. JUSPAO was now organized and

operational and, along with U.S. Army PSYOP personnel, they planned to revitalize

*Chieu Hoi* and prove what they could accomplish.

[1]Stanley Sandler, *"Cease Resistance: It's Good for You!": A History of U.S. Army Combat Psychological Operations*, 2nd ed. (Washington, D.C.: American Institutes for Research, 1999), 1-4, 38-39.

[2]Ibid., 40-46.

[3]Harry D. Latimer, *Monograph on National Security Affairs: U.S. Psychological Operations in Vietnam* (Providence, RI: Brown University, September 1973), 2-3.

[4]Quoted in: BDM Corporation, *A Study of Strategic Lessons Learned in Vietnam: Volume VI; Conduct of the War: Book 2; Functional Analyses* (McLean, VA.: The BDM Corporation, 2 May 1980), 13-1.

[5]Ibid., 13-1.

[6]Latimer, *U.S. Psychological Operations in Vietnam*, 2-3.

[7]BDM Corp., *Strategic Lessons Learned in Vietnam*, 13-3.

[8]Robert W. Chandler, *War of Ideas: The U.S. Propaganda Campaign in Vietnam* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1981), 25.

[9]Frank L. Goldstein (Colonel, USAF), *Psychological Operations: Principles and Case Studies* (Maxwell Air Force Base: Air University Press, 1996), 233.

[10]Latimer, *U.S. Psychological Operations in Vietnam*, 4.

[11]Chandler, *War of Ideas*, 25.

[12]Goldstein, *Psychological Operations*, 233.

[13]Military Assistance Command Vietnam, *Command History, United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam 1965* (Saigon: USMACV Military History Branch, 20 April 1966), 253.

[14]Sandler, *Cease Resistance: It's Good for You*, 262-263.

[15]MACV, *Command History, 1965*, 253.

[16]Joint United States Public Affairs Office, *BIODATA - Barry Zorthian* (Saigon: JUSPAO, December 1966), 1.

[17]Joint United States Public Affairs Office, *General Briefing Book: JUSPAO Vietnam* (Saigon: JUSPAO, January 1966), 1.

[18]Ibid., 1-2.

[19]MACV, *Command History, 1965*, 253.

[20]Sandler, *Cease Resistance: It's Good for You*, 263.

[21]MACV, *Command History, 1965*, 253.

[22]Latimer, *U.S. Psychological Operations in Vietnam*, 24-25.

[23]Ibid., 25.

[24]Sandler, *Cease Resistance: It's Good for You*, 264-266.

[25]Chandler, *War of Ideas*, 14.

[26]Ibid., 16.

[27]Department of State, *Department of State Publication 7933: Background Notes – South Viet-Nam* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, June 1966), 1.

[28]JUSPAO, *General Briefing Book*, 4-5.

[29]Andrew D. Sens and Joseph M. Macrum, *Notes on Psychological Opportunities in the Republic of Vietnam* (Washington, D.C.: Counterinsurgency Information Analysis Center, Special Operations Research Office, The American University, 30 June 1965), 6.

[30]Chandler, *War of Ideas*, 16.

[31]Sens, *Psychological Opportunities in Vietnam*, 16-17.

[32]Military Assistance Command Vietnam, *Command History, United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam 1966 (with change 1)* (Saigon: USMACV Military History Branch, 30 June 1967), 558.

[33]Military Assistance Command Vietnam, *The Chieu Hoi Program.* (Saigon: *Chieu Hoi* Division, MACCORD, February 1967), 3.

[34]Garry D. Brewer, "Chieu Hoi: The Surrender Program in Vietnam," *Air University Review*, September-October 1967, 2.

[35]United States Mission to Vietnam, *Chieu Hoi Newsletter: Issue No. 7* (Saigon: Office of Civil Operations, *Chieu Hoi* Division, 27 April 1967), 14-15.

[36]BDM Corp., *Strategic Lessons Learned in Vietnam*, 13-5.

[37]Richard A. Hunt, *Pacification: The American Struggle for Vietnam's Hearts and Minds* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995), 2-3.

[38]Ibid., 20-22.

[39]Ibid., 24-30.

[40]MACV, *Command History, 1966*, 554.

[41]Sandler, *Cease Resistance: It's Good for You*, 263.

[42]Ulysses S. Grant Sharp (Admiral, USN) and William C. Westmoreland (General, USA), *Report on the War in Vietnam (As of 30 June 1968)* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1968), 237-8.

[43]MACV, *Command History, 1965*, 252.

[44]Latimer, *U.S. Psychological Operations in Vietnam*, 7.

[45]Shelby L. Stanton, *U.S. Army and Allied Ground Forces in Vietnam: Order of Battle* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. News Books, 1981), 237.

[46]Mobile Training Teams deployed earlier but their job was training the RVNAF, not performing PSYOP tasks themselves.

[47]United States Broadcasting and Visual Support Activity Pacific, *Special Orders Number 134 – Extract* (Headquarters, US Army Broadcasting and Visual Activity Pacific, Okinawa, 22 July 1965), 1-2. This order is reproduced on the following web site: http://www.timyoho.com/BVAPage/HistoryPsyWar/1st-PsyOps.htm.

[48]Herbert A. Friedman, *The 24th PSYOP Detachment in Vietnam*; available from http://www.psywarrior.com/24thPsyopDet.html, 1-3, 7, 12.

[49]5th Special Forces Group. *Command Report for Quarterly Period Ending 31 December 1965* (Headquarters, 5th Special Forces Group, 15 January 1966), np.

[50]MACV, *Command History, 1965*, 254; and MACV, *Command History, 1966*, 555.

[51]Sandler, *Cease Resistance: It's Good for You*, 261.

[52]Goldstein, *Psychological Operations*, 234.

[53]Sandler, *Cease Resistance: It's Good for You*, 261.

CHAPTER 3

PSYOP GROWTH: 1966-1967

The deployment of the 6th PSYOP Battalion to Vietnam and expansion of the overall PSYOP effort naturally caused some growing pains within the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) and the rest of the U.S. Mission in Vietnam. MACV and the Joint U.S. Public Affairs Office (JUSPAO) re-examined the roles defined with the creation of JUSPAO in 1965, but the result was more discussion than change. As the expanding PSYOP force struggled to fulfill the personnel and equipment requirements of their new organization structure, the 6th PSYOP Battalion accelerated their efforts supporting the *Chieu Hoi* program, and *Chieu Hoi* appeals became an integral part of most tactical PSYOP missions. PSYOP support to pacification programs expanded as well, but only insofar as the combat units supported by PSYOP took on pacification tasks. The creation of the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) office as an element of MACV in 1967 shifted some elements and priorities within JUSAPAO, a harbinger of more changes to come in following years. Through these events, operational demands on the PSYOP force continued to increase, and with little results gained from attempts to place greater burdens on Vietnamese Political Warfare (POLWAR) units, soon outstripped the abilities of even the expanded military PSYOP force to support. In response to this, by the end of 1967 PSYOP forces were again expanding and reorganizing, creating the force that, despite later reductions in numbers of soldiers assigned, would remain structurally unchanged for nearly four years.

MACV intended the expansion of PSYOP forces in Vietnam that began in late 1965 to culminate with one PSYOP Battalion and one Air Commando Squadron

(PSYOP). Personnel from 7th PSYOP Group's Vietnam Detachment of the US Army Broadcasting and Visual Activity Pacific (USABVAPAC) became the cadre for the battalion headquarters. These personnel, combined with soldiers deployed from Fort Bragg, North Carolina, formed the headquarters of the 6th PSYOP Battalion, officially activated on 7 February 1966.[1] The 6th PSYOP Battalion's Table of Organization and Equipment (TOE) authorized 91 personnel in the headquarters company alone,[2] a substantial increase in strength over USABVAPAC strength at Tan Son Nhut.[3]

The MACV plan to expand the PSYOP force was not just to create a PSYOP battalion headquarters, but also to expand the tactical PSYOP force under the command of that battalion. The seven PSYOP detachments already in South Vietnam[4] provided a cadre for this expansion just as USABVAPAC personnel formed the battalion headquarters. MACV expanded these detachments into three tactical PSYOP companies intended to support three of Vietnam's four Military Regions (MR1, MR2, and MR3) on 10 February 1966. Each of the three companies, when established, had an authorized TOE strength of 60[5] so this also was a significant growth over the less than 100 soldiers in the PSYOP detachments already on the ground.[6] The 244th PSYOP Company supported MR1 from Nha Trang and the 246th supported MR3 from Bien Hoa. The 24th PSYOP Detachment, located in Pleiku, reorganized to form the 245th PSYOP Company to support operations in MR2.[7]

Through 1965, no U.S. Army PSYOP unit operated in the Mekong Delta region and the PSYOP growth in early 1966 still left Military Region 4 (MR4) without a dedicated military PSYOP element.[8] MACV was not able to correct this shortcoming until the 19th PSYOP Company (Advice and Support) established itself at Can Tho on 19

November 1966.[9] The 6th PSYOP Battalion established printing operations to support the 19th Company at Binh Thuy Airbase.

The Operational Report – Lessons Learned (OR-LL) covering activities of the 6th PSYOP Battalion from 1 May through 31 July 1966 indicates that this increase in personnel requirements was greater than the number of available, qualified soldiers. Specifically, this OR-LL cites a message from the Department of the Army (DA) stating that there were no available personnel to fill 15 officer and 38 enlisted positions (21 of these at the company level) requiring language skills. Although by July the number of replacements exceeded the number who returned home at the completion of their tour, the gap early in the reporting period had to be covered by sending eleven soldiers on temporary duty from 7th PSYOP Group on Okinawa.[10] The lack of qualified personnel in the next three-month reporting period caused the 6th PSYOP Battalion commander to ask for 30-day extensions of the personnel he would have lost in January 1967.[11] The fact that MACV approved this request indicates that the personnel shortage was a significant obstacle to effectiveness.

That personnel shortages were a significant but not overwhelming obstacle to effectiveness can be deduced from the fact that PSYOP mission requirements continued to increase through 1966 and in to 1967. In the first six-month period of operations (February to July 1966), the 6th PSYOP Battalion's print facility produced 200 million leaflets. Print facility personnel commonly worked 20 to 24-hour operations but while personnel could work in shifts, the print presses, generators, and paper cutters could not, resulting in numerous equipment breakdowns as well as shortages of critical supplies such as printing plates.[12] Although lack of repair parts continued to be a problem, print

output increased substantially in the next three months, with over 132 million leaflets produced.[13]

In part due to the stress of mission requirements overloading their capabilities, but also due to the natural process of soldiers adapting peacetime practices to meet unanticipated wartime requirements, the 6th PSYOP Battalion gradually began to change their organizational structure from what PSYOP doctrine prescribed. PSYOP forces were sent to Vietnam in 1965 and 1966 following the cellular organization structure explained in detail in Appendix B. Over time, shortcomings in this structure began to appear so the soldiers on the ground changed their organization. One shortcoming of the cellular structure was a lack of the functional, numbered staff sections familiar elsewhere in U.S. Army organizations (i.e., S-1, S-2, etc.). For example, the 6th PSYOP Battalion had a FC Team (Propaganda Current Intelligence) and a FD Team (Propaganda Research and Analysis) filling the role of a battalion's S-2 (Intelligence) section. In September 1966, these two teams reorganized into a section consisting of four teams: administration, liaison, interrogation, and research and analysis. At about the same time, the battalion's S-3 (Operations) section adopted a non-doctrinal organization consisting of a print control section, leaflet processing and bomb loading sections, and other elements to track shipments of paper and other operational functions.[14] This process of examining roles and adapting structure to meet missions need conducted within the 6th PSYOP Battalion was matched by a near-simultaneous examining of roles and relationships within the U.S. Mission in Vietnam.

One of the first priorities issued by JUSPAO to the expanded military PSYOP force in 1966 was to expand PSYOP Support to the *Chieu Hoi* Program. Despite only

assigning one American advisor to support *Chieu Hoi* in early 1965[15], JUSPAO revived

the program in the second half of 1965 reversing the declining trend in returnees over the

first half of the year. Psychological efforts supporting *Chieu Hoi*, known collectively as

the *Chieu Hoi* Inducement Program, encompassed all U.S. military and civilian PSYOP

as well as Vietnamese activities intended to encourage Viet Cong (VC) combatants and

supporters return to the Government of the Republic of Vietnam.[16] JUSPAO planners

hoped to use both American and Vietnamese combined efforts to continue the upward

trend in returnees from 1965 into 1966, using the Tet holiday of 1966 as a launching

point for a new campaign.

This effort, conducted 9-20 January 1966, was the largest combined PSYOP

effort conducted in Vietnam up to then. U.S. military PSYOP printing presses in Vietnam

turned out 92 million leaflets to support this campaign and the 7th PSYOP Group on

Okinawa printed an additional 69.5 million leaflets and shipped them to Vietnam. USIS

facilities in the Philippines also provided printed materials augmenting an array of radio

programs and loudspeaker broadcasts. The huge effort appeared to achieve impressive

results in the following weeks, although MACV later reduced the reported number of

returnees since 2,762 civilian refugees were counted in the returnee figures. Still, the

effort convinced Vietnamese Premier Ky, who the MACV command history describes as

"rather cool" toward *Chieu Hoi*, that the program deserved his government's support.[17]

In July and August of 1966, MACV received indications of VC concern over the

increasing successes of *Chieu Hoi*, including orders to assassinate *Hoi Chanh*, some

successful assassinations, captured documents describing counter-*Chieu Hoi* propaganda

plans, reports of plans to attack *Chieu Hoi* Centers, and ground fire against loudspeaker-mounted aircraft.[18]

By the end of 1966, Vietnamese and U.S. efforts resulted in 20,242 *Hoi Chanh* returned (or rallied) to the Government of Vietnam (GVN). About two-thirds of these were VC combatants rather than political supporters, a significant drain on enemy strength. The number of *Hoi Chanh* since the program's inception now totaled 48,041, and the trend in ralliers had been increasing steadily since mid-1965. More important, MACV estimated the total cost of the program so far (not counting US salaries) at only $125.12 per returnee.[19] JUSPAO estimates were slightly higher, showing a cost per *Hoi Chanh* of $150, but when compared to the estimated $322,000 cost per VC combatant killed, the program was remarkably inexpensive no matter which estimate was correct.[20]

JUSPAO and MACV PSYOP planners hoped to duplicate the success of the 1966 Tet Campaign in January 1967, but experienced difficulty in coordinating with their GVN counterparts to publish necessary directives. Nevertheless, the 1967 Tet Campaign began on 11 January and continued through the end of February. The combined effort included dropping over 300 million leaflets, loudspeaker broadcasts using over two thousand different taped appeals, and both radio and television broadcasts. MACV, though acknowledging in their *1967 Command History* that, "the Tet campaign was not solely responsible," still determined that these efforts largely accounted for the record monthly high *Hoi Chanh* figure of 2,917 in February 1967. This perceived success led MACV to continue February's campaign into March, dropping 87 million leaflets calling for a "Spring Reunion" along with 27 million safe conduct passes. MACV attributed the continuation of the Tet campaign through March to be the cause of March's *Hoi Chanh*

total nearly doubling the record return of February with 5,557 ralliers.[21] Although

monthly returnee tallies dropped again through the months following March, by the end

of 1967 a total of 27,178 *Hoi Chanh* had rallied, a 34 percent increase from 1966.[22] More

importantly, 17,671 of these *Hoi Chanh* (about 65 percent) were from the military

component of the VC.[23] This figure approximates the strength of two VC divisions and is

roughly one-fifth of the total number of VC and NVA personnel killed or captured

(91,595) during the same year.[24]

The GVN, convinced that the program had merit after the successes of 1966,

increased spending on *Chieu Hoi* in 1967 to 85 percent of obligated funds, a substantial

increase from 31 percent in 1966. GVN also increased the capacity of *Chieu Hoi* centers

in 1967 to nearly twice their previous size. In 1967, U.S. advisory support increased,

matching the increase in Vietnamese support to the program. With the creation of

CORDS, the Ministry of Information and Chieu Hoi (MICH) advisory effort became a

CORDS program and the number of advisors dedicated to Chieu Hoi increased.[25]

However, the *Chieu Hoi* program still had shortcomings, not the least of which

was that many in GVN simply did not trust the *Hoi Chanh* so they made little effort to

ease their re-entry into society.[26] One province chief jailed defectors rather than

rehabilitate them, but this was an exception. There were also reports of ARVN soldiers

removing Hoi Chanh from *Chieu Hoi* centers for beatings. Additionally, in 1967 only

about 5,400 ralliers received promised vocational training (slightly less than 20 percent),

showing that the program still lacked some of the resources it needed to meet all

performance goals.[27] Finally, *Chieu Hoi* retained the stigma associated with Diem as its

creator, so few GVN officials were inclined to support it until they were confronted with its effectiveness and relatively low cost.[28]

What was quickly obvious to the tactical PSYOP teams was that *Chieu Hoi* appeals were an extremely effective method for supporting tactical combat operations. Although it was not readily apparent, later analysis of these tactical uses of *Chieu Hoi* appeals would show that the combination of the appeals with military operations was much more effective than appeals done in isolation from combat operations.[29] MACV planners in 1966 did note that monthly returnee totals spiked during February, coinciding with four major and two smaller combat operations,[30] without yet making a direct link to PSYOP effectiveness.

What <u>was</u> readily apparent was that *Chieu Hoi* ralliers provided immediate feedback to show successful use of PSYOP to an often-skeptical commander. Returnees also proved to have practical benefits on the battlefield. For example, since it was impossible on the battlefield to discern a difference between someone attempting to surrender and someone trying to rally, PSYOP teams routinely offered potential returnees a chance to cooperate with friendly forces as a show of good faith. These offers often resulted in Hoi Chanh providing information or serving as guides to locate arms caches, find VC safe areas, and identify VC agents among civilian populations.[31]

The 6th PSYOP Battalion product developers designed the arguments used in these *Chieu Hoi* appeals to take advantage of four assumed target audience susceptibilities. The first of these was the physical and mental hardships suffered by the VC such as physical danger, illness, fatigue, and sometimes lack of food. Second, any dissension caused by either real or perceived unfair treatment. Third was disillusionment,

the lack of perceived progress and resultant perception that ultimate VC victory was unlikely. The fourth susceptibility was the reputation of the *Chieu Hoi* program, because the program actually did what it was advertised to do and this verifiable reality enhanced the credibility of *Chieu Hoi* appeals. All four of these appeals were effective to the average *Hoi Chanh*, who was a rural farmer conscripted into the VC rather than being a volunteer.[32]

To an extent, MACV became concerned over the great success in numbers of Hoi Chanh from early 1967 and the comparative decline in the second half of the same year. This caused MACV and JUSPAO to scrutinize the program. MACV judged that part of the decline was due to the decline in operations like IRVING, CEDAR FALLS, and JUNCTION CITY that had penetrated areas the VC thought of as sanctuaries, and directed the newly formed CORDS with developing a plan to increase the returnee rate. CORDS suggested a nine-point plan t do that, the first three points being: (1) military operations to strike VC sanctuaries, (2) incorporation of Chieu Hoi appeals into all military and civil operations, and (3) a higher priority for PSYOP in all operations.[33] Placing a recommendation to increase the priority for PSYOP so high in the CORDS plan indicates that the strong emphasis on PSYOP at MACV did not necessarily extend to the commanders and staffs at lower levels.

In fact, U.S. tactical unit commanders often did not fully incorporate PSYOP into their tactical operations. One reason for this was a tendency by commanders to underestimate the potential effectiveness of PSYOP, maintaining the notion that PSYOP efforts took too long to be effective. This usually resulted in PSYOP conducted as an ancillary, rather than integrated, element of tactical operations. In other words, the

PSYOP command was present, planning and executing PSYOP tasks, but they did not integrate or synchronize their activities with combat mission planners or provide them with advice about the psychological effects of their courses of action.

Another problem with combat commanders failing to integrate PSYOP into their plans was overestimation, where commanders thought PSYOP could produce instant results on the battlefield. This misunderstanding sometimes resulted in resort to gimmickry in an effort to produce immediate results, such as the 4th Infantry Division's use of a device they called the "magic eye," two boxes with non-functional dials, gauges, antennae, and remotely operated lights. U.S. personnel told villagers that the device would detect VC, and that they would receive better treatment if they confessed before the device revealed them. When a known VC villager passed between the boxes, the hidden operator triggered the lights, "proving" the device's effectiveness and causing three VC in the community to confess.[34] Lieutenant Colonel Beck, in his Senior Officer Debrief, called the use of gimmickry, such as projecting images on clouds or using ghostly loudspeaker broadcasts, as "more-or-less desperate attempts to find a quick solution" to show "solid evidence of positive results." Beck asserted that effective PSYOP takes time and instant results are usually the result of other factors that predisposed a target audience to complying with a PSYOP argument. He also pointed out that units could not sustain trickery for long, and once the lie was revealed it would damage the credibility of PSYOP personnel.[35] Worse, once gimmickry failed to achieve results, the commander who once overestimated the potential of PSYOP now was even more inclined to relegate PSYOP to an ancillary function rather than integrate it into his combat plans.

This tendency to compartmentalize--wanting PSYOP support for their units, but separating rather than integrating it with tactical activities, was an unintended result of General Westmoreland's command emphasis. Through the buildup of U.S. forces through 1965 and 1966, General Westmoreland "emphasized to officers arriving in-country the need for giving full attention to PSYWAR, and consequently" commanders requested more PSYOP support. When MACV, on 24 March 1966, queried First and Second Field Force (I FFV and II FFV) commanders on how to alleviate "shortages of PSYOP staff personnel," the commanders predictably "confirmed the need for more PSYOP personnel" and recommended that MACV "augment their TOE with the desired staff sections."[36] Combat commanders, when asked by higher headquarters if they want more of anything, are naturally inclined to respond with an emphatic yes. If MACV had instead asked, "do you need PSYOP?" they may have received a different answer.

However, given the MACV emphasis on psychological operations, most commanders were eager to point out what they were doing in the PSYOP field, but their misunderstanding caused them to rely more on measures of performance rather than measures of effectiveness. Given the choice to try to quantify by how much a unit has decreased the morale of enemy forces, for example, it is easy to understand why units tended to report how many leaflets were dropped rather than what effect those leaflets produced. Figures from a combined OR-LL for the U.S. 1st Infantry Division and subordinate brigades for the last quarter of 1967 illustrates this phenomena. The report tallies numbers of leaflets dropped per brigade (the highest being over 23 million) as well as the aerial loudspeaker broadcast time (in hours and minutes), but gives no indication of what themes the leaflets or broadcasts supported, what reasoning was used to target a

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particular product in any particular area, or the effectiveness of any of these efforts.[37] This is indicative of a command that wanted PSYOP as an adjunct activity, showing high levels of performance by increasing measurable output, but probably failed to integrate the intended effects of the effort into division or brigade operations.

Of the three subordinate brigade reports, 1st Brigade's provides the most detail on their PSYOP efforts. The brigade's PSYOP loudspeaker broadcasts almost exclusively supported national-level themes, listing as subjects "*Chieu Hoi*, Rally instructions, Search and Seal, Weapons Reward, GVN versus VC, MEDCAP, and the Commanding General's *Chieu Hoi* message." Only two of these subjects appear to be specific to the division or brigade and the last listed is only a personalized message supporting a national theme, the *Chieu Hoi* Inducement program. PSYOP may have been more effective if focused in support of the division and brigade commander's objectives rather than re-hashing national-level themes and messages. It is also probable, given that Civil Affairs reported the distribution of one midwife kit, 50 pounds of soap, and 30 tooth brushes (among other things), that little thought was going into the intended effect of PSYOP or Civic Action, but documenting effort in all areas was considered important.[38] Lieutenant Colonel Beck's Senior Officer Debrief succinctly sums up this trend when he states that "in spite of top level command emphasis on the importance of PSYOP too often a combat commander will not develop his operational concept in terms of its psychological implication; all-important in a counterinsurgency."[39] In this way, PSYOP seemed to be associated in the minds of combat commanders with the 'hearts and minds' pacification programs that were considered with disdain by many.

In part, the U.S. tendency to look on pacification programs with disdain was due to the general failure of GVN pacification programs prior to and during 1965, a causal factor in the deployment of large numbers of U.S. combat units. By the end of 1965, the U.S. Mission estimated that the preceding two years of political instability in South Vietnam had resulted in no pacification progress in 60 percent of the provinces. However, even in March 1965 at the beginning of the U.S. troop buildup, the President and members of the U.S. Mission still recognized that pacification "needed more American support" if nothing more than as a supporting effort for U.S. combat operations. Although General Westmoreland's attrition strategy gave commanders little incentive to devote time, troops, or resources to pacification, at higher levels there was significant efforts to institute effective programs to promote the legitimacy of GVN.[40]

The GVN provided the driving force to revive pacification efforts at this time, primarily due to two factors. First, the influx of large numbers of U.S. combat units had made a military defeat unlikely. Second, the government under President Nguyen Van Thieu and Premier Nguyen Cao Ky had attained a level of stability not seen since the assassination of President Diem in 1963. Premier Ky appointed Major General Nguyen Duc Thang as the Minister of Revolutionary Development in October 1965, and in 1966 he expanded Thang's control, adding the Ministries of Youth, Agriculture, and Public Works to his portfolio. General Thang, now with authority over nearly every aspect of pacification, merged a number of existing programs into the Revolutionary Development Cadre, teams of "fifty-nine men and women between the ages of twenty-one and twenty-nine" that "were assigned a staggering array of tasks" at the hamlet level as revolutionaries and agents of social change. The chief drawbacks to this program were

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the danger of VC attacks on team members, recruiting of team members from other government agencies, and the disincentive of service on a RD team not counting toward obligated military service resulting in team members still being subject to the draft. However, despite these flaws and the uphill fight team members faced in overcoming the lack of credibility GVN faced among the rural population, the program did show promise and some qualified successes.[41]

Despite General Thang's dynamism and leadership, pacification efforts through 1966 and 1967 were not making the progress many hoped for. Cumbersome administrative procedures, corruption among administrators all hampered the effectiveness of Thang's efforts. For example, Regional Force / Popular Force (RF/PF) leaders frequently padded their rosters with deceased or imaginary soldiers and siphoned off the uncollected pay. While Thang enjoyed centralized control over the chief elements of the pacification effort, there was no similarly centralized structure within the U.S. Mission. There was a conviction that Vietnamese entities would not be able to make significant progress unless energized by Americans, spurring the need for an organizational change. Following the advice of General Westmoreland and presidential aide Robert W. Komer, President Johnson signed National Security Action Memorandum (NSAM) 362, authorizing the creation of the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) office as a subordinate element of MACV, on 9 May 1967.[42]

Creation of CORDS caused organizational changes in many other elements of the U.S. Mission, including JUSPAO. The JUSPAO province-level field PSYOP officers, both military and civilian, were responsible for promoting national-level PSYOP themes

and coordinating all PSYOP or POLWAR activities in their Area of Responsibility (AOR). In the provinces, a Vietnamese military officer, usually a lieutenant colonel or major, was the officer responsible for military and pacification operations and the JUSPAO PSYOP officer provided advice and coordinated PSYOP support from outside (often military) sources. These JUSPAO field officers were absorbed within the CORDS structure in 1967. As a result, these field PSYOP officers focused their attention more on support to *Chieu Hoi* and pacification programs and advice to the Vietnamese Information Service (VIS) Chief in their province, rather than support to other JUSPAO themes. In real terms though, the organizational change had no lasting effect other than a temporary and minor diversion of effort toward bureaucratic bickering, until these officers returned to the control of JUSPAO in 1969.[43]

Military PSYOP support to the pacification effort consisted of printing, dissemination, and advisory efforts. Printing efforts consisted of battalion and company print sections and by coordinating for additional print support from Okinawa and Japan. PSYOP personnel disseminated in three ways, face-to-face contacts, leaflet drops, and ground and air loudspeaker broadcasts. Advisory efforts were mostly a purview of JUSPAO, but the 6th PSYOP Battalion's Motion Picture Advisory Section provided training and advice to the Vietnamese Political Warfare Directorate on the operation and maintenance of photographic equipment and production advice for television and radio programs. The stated objectives of these pacification support activities were to help establish population control and to cause the population to deny support to the VC and expose hidden VC personnel.[44] In this, military PSYOP efforts faced a serious obstacle in that the population often had little desire to support the GVN.

There is no clear distinction between the legitimacy of the government . . . and the Viet Cong. Because identification is focused on the family and the village, the government is not seen, as it is in Western tradition, as a unique object of loyalty. It is simply one of a number of forces which attempts to assert its rights, coerce the peasants, and exert its will.[45]

Lieutenant Colonel Beck cited a similar weakness, stating, "one of the greatest handicaps to a psychological operations program in RVN is a lack of identity of the government with the people (and vice versa)." Acknowledging that the Vietnamese Government should address this problem, Beck stated that GVN appeared to be doing nothing to provide the Vietnamese something to rally to and identify with. Therefore, according to Beck, his soldiers were forced "to work around this deficiency" although the lack of evidence of meaningful economic or social change, such as land reform, seriously handicapped U.S. PSYOP efforts.[46] In other words, because the GVN was failing to inspire confidence in their own people, U.S. PSYOP personnel had to try to inspire that confidence for the GVN. That this effort met with little success is hardly surprising.

The population of Vietnam also evinced little support for the U.S. presence in Vietnam. Four aspects of Vietnamese psychology, rooted in their history and culture, shaped their attitude toward the presence of U.S. Army. According to JUSPAO documents, Vietnamese pride in their ancient civilization and their memories of other foreign presences (most recently French but also Chinese) were two of the four aspects. Another was awareness that Vietnamese were suffering the majority of the war's burden in terms of casualties. Finally, the Vietnamese were aware of other non Communist countries in Asia who were, according to the JUSPAO briefing book "their own masters."[47] Communist propaganda writers in North Vietnam incorporated all of these themes into their attempts to paint the American presence in Vietnam as a colonial

vestige,[48] and GVN never effectively challenged these themes.[49] Lieutenant Colonel

Beck noted that, because of this phenomenon, labeling the VC as the enemy simply

because they were communist was not effective. Except in areas where the VC had used

violence to coerce the population, popular attitudes ranged "from neutralism or apathy

(most prevalent) to varying degrees of acceptance of Communist control."[50] The net

effect of this attitude among the Vietnamese meant that in areas where the VC had

committed no atrocity that caused the population to view them as an enemy, using this

label actually detracted from the credibility of PSYOP products.

Lieutenant Colonel Beck also points out the importance of personal, face-to-face

communications and psychological actions as part of an effective PSYOP program.

While police and paramilitary heavy-handedness sometimes were detrimental to

achieving PSYOP goals, Beck stated their face-to-face contact with the populace could

enhance a local PSYOP program if they were incorporated into the effort. He goes on to

advocate Civic Action missions as PSYOP "of the deed" with the potential to achieve

great influence effects. Unfortunately, according to Beck, "few of these actions are

deliberately made a part of the total PSYOP effort regionally or locally" and most fail to

incorporate PSYOP "to complement the action and 'pass a message' to the audience

concerned." In this, Beck notes an additional area where mission planners routinely left

PSYOP as an ancillary action rather than integrating it into the total effort.[51]

However, difficulties in reaching the target audience within South Vietnam were

more easily surmounted that the obstacles to effective communication outside South

Vietnam. Difficulties in reaching the target audiences hampered PSYOP efforts directed

against North Vietnam, and misunderstanding the situation of target audience members

hindered effective PSYOP campaigns. For example, leaflet operations against VC forces in Cambodian sanctuaries planned in late 1965 were not executed until late September 1966 because of delays in approval for cross-border flights.[52] PSYOP efforts against North Vietnam began in April 1965 to explain "the necessity for US bombings" and warn people to stay away from potential targets.[53] However, the intended targets for these leaflets often had little choice in where they lived or worked. Although later interviews showed the leaflets caused some resentment when authorities would not permit civilians to evacuate a potential target area,[54] overall they were of limited effectiveness.

The bombing pause that began on Christmas Eve, 1965 caused a halt to leaflet drops over North Vietnam as well, and the U.S. Secretary of State recommended MACV suspend the development of leaflets to increase the chance that North Vietnam would look on U.S. peace initiatives favorably. Leaflet drops resumed in February, but were of only limited effectiveness in achieving their stated aim to cause dissension among the population in order to force North Vietnam to cease their aggression against South Vietnam. In part this was due to North Vietnamese efforts to collect and destroy leaflets and conduct counterpropaganda meetings.[55] More important however was the fact that the North Vietnamese population had little ability, no matter how much resentment they felt, to influence the course of action decided on by the Lao Dong party.

The obvious solution to problems overcoming communications barriers inside Vietnam and meeting the increased mission loads outstripping PSYOP capabilities was to increase the use of Vietnamese POLWAR. MACV recognized this,[56] but Vietnamese POLWAR units had competing agendas and lacked the capability to conduct tasks that were a matter of course for U.S. military PSYOP units. Overall, while there seemed to be

a significantly increased amount of advice provided to the Vietnamese across 1966 and 1967, there seemed to be little true cooperation or coordination. Reasons for this were many, but to begin with, Vietnamese POLWAR and U.S. PSYOP organizations differed significantly because each had a different purpose. An advisory team from the Nationalist Chinese forces on Taiwan influenced the development and ultimate structure of Vietnamese POLWAR. What U.S. advisors thought of as a PSYOP function was only one of the responsibilities of a POLWAR unit or staff officer, along with counter-intelligence, chaplain and religious activities, post exchanges and commissaries, and social welfare activities. While U.S. PSYOP units and planners could focus on efforts to influence external target audiences, Vietnamese POLWAR officers had internal audiences to consider and they viewed their own soldiers as their first priority, with the civilian population and the enemy as second and third priorities, respectively.[57]

Lieutenant Colonel Beck determined that the fundamental difficulty in cooperation between Vietnamese POLWAR and U.S. PSYOP forces was this difference of opinion on intended audiences and prioritization. He noted that Vietnamese POLWAR concern with internal loyalty left the Vietnamese population as secondary considerations, while U.S. PSYOP soldiers viewed this population as the highest priority. However, differences over prioritization did not create a gulf that estranged one from the other. Beck cited close relationships between PSYOP and POLWAR down to team level and noted that the level of cooperation between them was quite good, except for the fact that "ARVN commanders . . . tend to be conservative and unwilling to expand programs or change methods."[58] However, the relatively good relationship between military PSYOP

and POLWAR units was not mirrored in the relationship between JUSPAO and the GVN Ministry of Information (MOI) or between the planning staffs at MACV and GPWD.

For example, of all the actions planned in early 1966 to increase the effectiveness of the *Chieu Hoi* program, coordination and cooperation with GPWD is the last listed and truly an afterthought. Only after MACV planners has arranged for printing leaflets using presses in Vietnam, importing additional printed materials from Okinawa, Japan, and the Philippines, and developed an extensive multimedia command information program did the feel it necessary to assist "the RVNAF GPWD with developing a similar set of instructions and program for the RVNAF."[59] In other words, instead of consulting with host-nation allies in developing a plan that would be effective in influencing Vietnamese civilians, MACV developed the plan themselves then helped the RVNAF implement a similar plan.

Therefore, the emphasis on PSYOP prevalent from MACV downward combined with frustration over Vietnamese civilian and military inability or unwillingness to take action prompted Americans to attempt to fill the perceived gap. As he was departing from command of 4th PSYOP Group, Lieutenant Colonel Beck recommended "greater reliance, for the time being, on U.S. PSYOP resources."[60] Although JUSPAO professed in their general briefing book "the underlying measure of success of an American in Vietnam is the degree to which he works himself out of a job by working with his Vietnamese counterpart,"[61] the sentiment only went so far when higher commanders and supervisors expected results. Americans often felt they could not rely on their Vietnamese counterparts so their only recourse to produce results was to again expand the U.S. PSYOP force.

On 11 June 1966, General Westmoreland directed MACV J5 to complete a comprehensive analysis of PSYOP structure in Vietnam, suspecting that the buildup of combat forces over the preceding year had not been matched by a corresponding increase in PSYOP capabilities. The first of two significant outcomes from this report became evident when the MACV J5 presented his findings on 23 July 1966. General Westmoreland did not concur with the recommendation to create a J7 staff section to provide planning and oversight for PSYOP, stating "that he was the MACV PSYWAR Officer, and that all commanders would assume this same responsibility by increasing greatly their efforts in PSYWAR."[62] Following this very clear statement of his preference and command emphasis, General Westmoreland made a decision that was the second significant consequence of the J5 PSYWAR analysis, "that immense emphasis would be placed on the provision of personnel and equipment at the tactical level to support a stepped-up PSYWAR program."[63] This decision led eventually to the expansion of PSYOP forces in Vietnam by an order of magnitude, from one battalion to a group headquarters with four subordinate battalions.

The consequences of Westmoreland's decisions are apparent in the 6th PSYOP Battalion's OR-LL dated 15 August 1966. Although the battalion had been active for less than six months, it was already evident in this report that expansion of the PSYOP force to meet mission requirements was necessary.[64] As a result, on 1 December 1967, the 244th PSYOP Company was re-designated 7th PSYOP Battalion, the 245th PSYOP Company was re-designated 8th PSYOP Battalion, and the 19th PSYOP Company was re-designated 10th PSYOP Battalion. On the same day, the 6th PSYOP Battalion headquarters was re-designated 4th PSYOP Group, and on 5 December 1967 the 246th

PSYOP Company was redesignated the new 6th PSYOP Battalion.[65] The net effect of this transformation was to increase the total number of military PSYOP personnel authorizations in Vietnam from 331 under the 6th PSYOP Battalion[66] to over 900 under the 4th PSYOP Group. In fact, the 4th PSYOP Group's authorized strength on inception was 946 U.S. military personnel plus 173 Vietnamese civilians. Lieutenant Colonel Beck, the officer who oversaw the transition as commander of 6th PSYOP Battalion and the first 4th PSYOP Group commander, called this strength adequate for current mission requirements, although he wanted some changes in skills and more loudspeaker and audio-visual teams.[67]

This greatly expanded force would, at its inception, face many of the same difficulties the force experienced less than two years earlier when the 6th PSYOP Battalion was established. Lack of qualified personnel, difficulties in maintaining mission-critical equipment, and struggles to ensure PSYOP forces were used to good effect by combat commanders all were experienced again in 1968, just on a larger scale. The first order of business for the PSYOP force was to prepare for the 1968 Tet returnee campaign, but the upcoming Tet holiday was going to be much different from the previous two. The long-range impact of the upcoming Tet campaign would result in marked changes to PSYOP priorities while organizational changes within MACV and the U.S. Mission would continue to influence how military PSYOP and CORDS implemented the PSYOP programs directed by JUSPAO.

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[1]Military Assistance Command Vietnam, *Command History, United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam 1966 (with change 1)* (Saigon: USMACV Military History Branch, 30 June 1967), 555.

[2]Shelby L. Stanton, *U.S. Army and Allied Ground Forces in Vietnam: Order of Battle* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. News Books, 1981), 237.

[3]United States Broadcasting and Visual Support Activity Pacific, *Special Orders Number 134 – Extract* (Headquarters, US Army Broadcasting and Visual Activity Pacific, Okinawa, 22 July 1965), 1-2.

[4]MACV, *Command History, 1966*, 555.

[5]Stanton, *Order of Battle*, 238.

[6]Herbert A. Friedman, *The 24th PSYOP Detachment in Vietnam*; available from http://www.psywarrior.com/24thPsyopDet.html, 12.

[7]Stanton, *Order of Battle*, 238.

[8]MACV, *Command History, 1966*, 558.

[9]Stanton, *Order of Battle*, 238.

[10]6th Psychological Operations Battalion, *Operational Report – Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 6th Psychological Operations Battalion* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 2 November 1966), 1 (hereafter cited as 6th POB, *OR-LL*, (2 November 1966)).

[11]6th Psychological Operations Battalion, *Operational Report – Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 6th Psychological Operations Battalion* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 4 April 1967), 1 (hereafter cited as 6th POB, *OR-LL*, (4 April 1967)).

[12]6th POB, *OR-LL*, (2 November 1966), 2-3.

[13]6th POB, *OR-LL*, (4 April 1967), 3.

[14]Ibid., 1-2.

[15]Richard A. Hunt, *Pacification: The American Struggle for Vietnam's Hearts and Minds* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995), 38.

[16]Joint United States Public Affairs Office, *Guidelines to Chieu Hoi Psychological Operations: The Chieu Hoi Inducement Program* (Saigon: JUSPAO, April 1966), 68.

[17]MACV, *Command History, 1966*, 558-559.

[18]Ibid., 563.

[19]Military Assistance Command Vietnam, *The Chieu Hoi Program* (Saigon: *Chieu Hoi* Division, MACCORD, February 1967), 3. The specific numbers of ralliers in previous years was 11,248 in 1963, 5,417 in 1964, and 11,124 in 1965.

[20]United States Mission to Vietnam, *Chieu Hoi Newsletter: Issue No. 7* (Saigon: Office of Civil Operations, *Chieu Hoi* Division, 27 April 1967), 13; and MACV, *Command History, 1966*, 565.

[21]Military Assistance Command Vietnam, *Command History, United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam 1967 Volume II* (Saigon: USMACV Military History Branch, 16 September 1968), 656-657.

[22]Ibid., 679-680.

[23]Hunt, *Pacification*, 101.

[24]MACV, *Command History, 1967*, 680.

[25]Hunt, *Pacification*, 101.

[26]MACV, *Command History, 1967*, 685.

[27]Hunt, *Pacification*, 102

[28]MACV, *Command History, 1966*, 561.

[29]MACV, *Command History, 1967*, 679. Returnee rates were "very closely related to the tempo of US/FW/RVN forces' military operations" but the analysis that proved the causal relationship did not come until the Bairdains' reports demonstrated this in 1971 – it was suspected prior by some but not conclusively proved until then.

[30]MACV, *Command History, 1966*, 559.

[31]MACV, *Command History, 1967*, 678.

[32]Ibid., 678-680.

[33]Ibid., 681.

[34]Ibid., 688.

[35]William J. Beck, *Senior Officer Debriefing Program: Report of Lieutenant Colonel William J. Beck* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 31 January 1969), 12-13.

[36]MACV, *Command History, 1966*, 555-556.

[37]1st Infantry Division, *Operational Report – Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 1st Infantry Division, Period Ending 31 January 1968* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 24 May 1968), 14. The specific numbers of leaflets dropped for the division were: 5,317,100 for 1st Brigade, 23,746,100 for 2nd Brigade, 5,667,400 for 3rd Brigade, and 14,511,300 distributed in general support to the division. The same report tallies loudspeaker broadcast hours per Brigade; 17 hours, 5 minutes for the 1st, 517 hours, 45 minutes for 2nd, 106 hours, 30 minutes for 3rd, and 68 hours, 50 minutes for the division G5.

[38]Ibid., 27.

[39]Beck, *Senior Officer Debriefing*, 13.

[40]Hunt, *Pacification*, 32-33, 35-36.

[41]Ibid., 36-38.

[42]Ibid., 39, 42, 86, 88.

[43]Harry D. Latimer, *Monograph on National Security Affairs: U.S. Psychological Operations in Vietnam* (Providence, RI: Brown University, September 1973), 9, 25-26.

[44]6th Psychological Operations Battalion, *Operational Report – Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 6th Psychological Operations Battalion* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 27 June 1967), 2-5.

[45]Michael L. Lanning and Dan Cragg, *Inside the VC and the NVA: The Real Story of North Vietnam's Armed Forces* (New York, NY: Fawcett Columbine, 1992), 50. Lanning is citing a Simulmatics study on improving the effectiveness of the *Chieu Hoi* Program published in 1967.

[46]Beck, *Senior Officer Debriefing*, 1-2.

[47]Joint United States Public Affairs Office, *General Briefing Book: JUSPAO Vietnam* (Saigon: JUSPAO, January 1966), 6-7.

[48]Ibid., 7.

[49]Quoted by Robert W. Chandler, *War of Ideas: The U.S. Propaganda Campaign in Vietnam* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1981), 6.

[50]Beck, *Senior Officer Debriefing*, 3.

[51]Ibid., 6-7.

[52]MACV, *Command History, 1966*, 576-577.

[53]Ibid., 554.

[54]Ibid., 573.

[55]Ibid., 571-573.

[56]MACV, *Command History, 1967*, 633.

[57]Latimer, *Psychological Operations in Vietnam*, 7.

[58]Beck, *Senior Officer Debriefing*, 4-5.

[59]MACV, *Command History, 1966*, 558-9.

[60]Beck, *Senior Officer Debriefing*, 18.

[61]JUSPAO, *General Briefing Book*, 7.

[62]MACV, *Command History, 1966*, 556.

[63]Ibid., 556.

[64]6th POB, *OR-LL*, (2 November 1966), 2-3.

[65]4th Psychological Operations Group, *Operational Report – Lessons Learned, Headquarters 4th Psychological Operations Group, Period Ending 31 January 1968* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 3 April 1968), 3.

[66]Stanton, *Order of Battle*, 237-8.

[67]Beck, *Senior Officer Debriefing*, 14.

CHAPTER 4

PSYOP TRANSITION AND ACTIVITIES 1968-1972

The combined effects of the Tet offensive in January 1968 and the creation of

CORDS in the preceding month had significant effects on military PSYOP priorities.

Further, the Tet offensive had psychological effects on Vietnamese civilians and both

Viet Cong (VC) and Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF) combatants that

changed their psychological vulnerabilities. In the U.S. Mission, the organizational

changes that resulted in the formation of CORDS in 1967 did not end there;

organizational changes within MACV and JUSPAO continued through 1968 and beyond.

The recently expanded 4th PSYOP Group increased the support provided to pacification

programs, especially the accelerated pacification campaign, and continued providing

strong support to the *Chieu Hoi* program. The results of the Tet offensive and the

initiation of negotiations with North Vietnam resulted in significant changes to PSYOP

efforts in North Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. With the steady increase in qualified

PSYOP personnel filling planning positions, combat commanders showed a growing

tendency to appreciate PSYOP capabilities and incorporate PSYOP into their plans.

However, the problem of PSYOP marginalization persisted in many commands while

most considered it too difficult to measure conclusive evidence that might secure more

integration into ongoing operations. Two significant studies into PSYOP effectiveness

undertaken during this period finally provided conclusive evidence of PSYOP

effectiveness, but too late to impact operations. The advent of Vietnamization resulted in

4th PSYOP Group's focus shifting more to pacification efforts and phased withdrawals of

U.S. military forces forced the transfer of PSYOP functions to the Vietnamese POLWAR

units, whether they were ready or not. The withdrawal of U.S. PSYOP forces and transfer of missions to the Vietnamese continued through the end of 1971, with the last PSYOP headquarters departing 21 December 1971.[1]

The Tet Offensive, launched on 29 January 1968, was a simultaneous attack on most provincial capitals as well as the national capital intended to touch off the General Uprising (*Khoi Ngia*) that would lead to ultimate victory. Unfortunately for the North Vietnamese Politburo, the offensive failed to spark the hoped-for uprising and it cost the VC and North Vietnamese Army (NVA) attackers 14,000 killed in just the first five days of fighting.[2] The total estimated number of casualties for the VC and NVA in the three major offensives of 1968 was 240,000 killed or wounded.[3] Further, atrocities such as those committed in Hue caused Vietnamese public sentiment toward the VC took a sharp decline in affected areas.[4] However, GVN prestige in the countryside similarly suffered as nearly ten percent of Regional Force – Popular Force (RF-PF) outposts were either abandoned or overrun and many RF-PF units were taken from the villages they were formed to defend to reinforce the defensive forces in towns and cities under VC attack.[5] While the full impact of the Tet offensive on public opinion in the United States is generally well known, the impacts on opinions in Vietnam (North and South) are less recognized. One significant impact was the decimation of the VC as a fighting force, forcing the commitment of North Vietnamese replacements to bring VC formations back up to strength. This action gradually changed the internal character of VC formations[6] and changed how the South Vietnamese population perceived those formations.

The internal character of VC formations changed because of the friction caused by Vietnamese regional bias. According to interview notes from one NVA, friction

between North and South Vietnamese was widespread because those from the North thought of themselves as better trained in political and military matters than their southern counterparts.[7] For their part, the southerners maintained a similarly low opinion of the northerners, especially when soldiers from the North assumed leadership positions over South Vietnamese who often had been fighting for years.[8] These frictions, while not widespread enough to cause a noticeable reduction in combat effectiveness, were nevertheless present and sometimes contributed to individual decisions to rally under the *Chieu Hoi* program.

The Joint U.S. Public Affairs Office (JUSPAO) issued policy guidance immediately following the Tet Offensive to take advantage of the changed situation. The policy directs all U.S. elements in Vietnam to emphasize to the Vietnamese population the staggering losses inflicted on the VC/NVA as well as the damage their attacks caused in heavily populated areas such as Pleiku. In PSYOP directed toward the enemy, the policy directed emphasis on the popular rejection of the call for a general uprising, the complete failure of all attacks and the staggering casualties suffered to no purpose.[9]

Coinciding with, but unrelated to the Tet offensive, a JUSPAO policy issued in January 1968 provided guidance on how civilian and military PSYOP should support the pacification effort. *Policy Number 53* refers to the various pacification programs as having the "essentially psychological objective of winning the active support of the rural people." The policy identified three main activities combined to win this support: providing territorial security, establishing political structure, and stimulating economic activity. The first activity, providing territorial security, was initially a military task but also involved the strengthening, or sometimes the creation, of Regional Force – Popular

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Force (RF-PF) security units as well as police formations. With security established,

Revolutionary Development (RD) Groups and, in the central highlands, Montagnard

*Tuong Son* teams could undertake the second and third activities, establishing political

structure and stimulating economic activity.[10] All of these activities involved

psychological components, and JUSPAO considered PSYOP support of each to be

critical.

> The PSYOP function in direct support of pacification goals is carried out
> in the provinces, at tactical unit level, at corps level and at headquarters by
> military and civilian PSYOP officers who apply their professional skills as
> communications specialists to the task of helping the GVN win and keep the
> loyalties of the rural population. … PSYOP support to Pacification is one of the
> most important tasks of CORDS PSYOP personnel in rural Viet Nam.[11]

For the military PSYOP elements, this JUSPAO policy finally provided guidance

on tasks that they had already been supporting for some time, but on an intermittent basis

whenever the combat unit they supported took on a mission involving pacification tasks

to some degree. What was different now was the recent formation of the office of Civil

Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) as a component of

MACV had increased the emphasis placed on pacification missions. This meant that

combat units were more likely to see pacification as important and therefore they were

more likely to involve their supporting PSYOP forces in tasks such as those described in

*Policy Number 53*.

However, JUSPAO directed *Policy Number 53* primarily at the province PSYOP

officers, so the military tactical PSYOP tasks were implied rather than explicitly stated.

These tasks included the use of ground and aerial loudspeakers to broadcast *Chieu Hoi*

and *Dai Doan Ket* appeals (specialized appeals for higher-ranking VC), use of

audiovisual teams to support Military Civic Action Program (MILCAP) missions, and

leaflet drops. Additional impacts of the policy were to increase the requirements for printing, adding additional burden to military print facilities in and out of Vietnam, and to direct military PSYOP soldiers serving in advisory roles to the General Political Warfare Department (GPWD) to assist in developing radio and motion picture products supporting the pacification program.[12]

GVN adopted a related program in December 1967, intending to synchronize the efforts of U.S. and GVN military and civilian elements to eliminate the Viet Cong Infrastructure (VCI), those Viet Cong operating clandestinely among the civilian population. GVN called the program *Phung Hoang* (all-seeing bird) and the U.S. used the closest term available in English, Phoenix. The program struggled through 1968 to become effective, with difficulties in training finger print specialists, establishing methods to share information across provincial and district boundaries, record-keeping, and corrupt officials susceptible to bribery.[13] The Tet Offensive was a setback to *Phung Hoang*, but in the aftermath of the offensive's failure was an opportunity to capture those VCI members who had shed their cover to lead the expected general uprising.[14] In the words of MACV, their military PSYOP force and JUSPAO provided extensive support to Phoenix in 1968, not only in technical and material support in the form of printed products and loudspeakers, but also in an advisory role in helping to draft scripts and appeals.[15]

As PSYOP forces shifted emphasis toward support to pacification efforts and related programs, such as Phoenix, the net effect on the overall PSYOP mission was not a change in tasks but an addition to tasks. For example, by the third quarter of 1969, the 4th PSYOP Group's in-country printing elements produced over 595 million leaflets, nearly

100 million of those for JUSPAO, GPWD, and other GVN agencies.[16] To understand

how this entails an expanded scale of printing requirements, consider that it took the 4th

PSYOP Group's print facility 28 months to print their 2-billionth leaflet in May 1968, but

they printed their 3-billionth in November, only seven months later.[17] As this expansion

of requirements reached the limit of military PSYOP capabilities, the force underwent

additional structural changes and relied more heavily on offshore support from the 7th

PSYOP Group and other agencies, and was forced to prioritize their efforts when

demands exceeded capabilities. Related structural and personnel changes in CORDS,

JUSPAO, and MACV would influence PSYOP priorities even more in the coming years.

Since the Psychological Operations Division (POD) of CORDS performed

functions redundant with those of JUSPAO and the MACV Psychological Operations

Directorate (MACPD), POD was eliminated from CORDS in October 1968. The

following month, MACPD was re-titled MACJ3-11, the PSYOP Division of MACV J3.[18]

Provincial PSYOP officers, initially assigned by JUSPAO then brought under the control

of CORDS in 1967, were a mix of civilian USIS and State Department civilians and

military officers loaned to JUSPAO. By the end of 1967, JUSPAO had assigned one and

sometimes two PSYOP officers to each province, with the officers drawn from the ranks

of USIS, USAID, and the military, to include a number of submariners provided by the

U.S. Navy.[19] In 1969, following the elimination of POD, these PSYOP officers were

returned to JUSPAO control because duties, such as their advisory role with the

Vietnamese Information Service (VIS), included more than just support to pacification.[20]

JUSPAO itself suffered a blow to their effectiveness when the director, Barry

Zorthian left to take over as President of Time-Life Broadcast early in 1968.[21] Zorthian

was by all accounts extremely capable and, more importantly, he had the confidence of President Johnson, Ambassadors Taylor, Lodge, and Bunker, as well as that of General Westmoreland. Zorthian's departure may have been in part due to his strained relationship with USIA caused by the fact that Vietnam was taking a disproportionate share of resources, especially personnel, and because the department had difficulty refusing requests when Zorthian had such influence. His replacement as the Embassy's Minister-Counsel of for Public Affairs and Director of JUSPAO was Edward J. Nickel, described by one JUSPAO officer as a "competent senior USIA officer who performed creditably" but who did not have the same influence as Zorthian in Saigon or in Washington.[22] In fact, one criticism of JUSPAO was that its complicated structure took someone of Zorthian's abilities to run effectively.[23] When General Abrams replaced General Westmoreland as COMUSMACV on 10 June 1968, it appeared that leadership across the U.S. Mission was changing in light of U.S. public reaction to Tet.

However, these leadership organizational changes still did not address the essential problem that JUSPAO continued to serve as a surrogate for the South Vietnamese Ministry of Information (MOI). This was due primarily to the relative weakness and lack of ability displayed by MOI resulting from how GVN viewed the ministry. Although the relative importance of psychological efforts had increased since 1966, Vietnamese political leaders still viewed MOI as a convenient place to put political supporters who might cause too much damage if placed in important positions.[24] In fact, in the eight-year period from 1964 to 1971, there were twelve Ministers of Information, and corruption, incompetence, and high personnel turnover plagued the organization at all levels.[25] Further, a similar situation within the Vietnamese General Political Warfare

Department (GPWD) and the Political Warfare (POLWAR) Battalions exacerbated the

problem caused by their competing priorities, hindering efforts to cooperate between

RVNAF and U.S. military PSYOP elements.[26] Most importantly, their association with

corrupt and ineffective Vietnamese counterpart organizations undermined the credibility

of U.S. civilian and military PSYOP efforts.[27]

The internal changes in JUSPAO and the jurisdictional battles between the

elements of the U.S. Mission still did not address the continuing problems of lack of

coordination and duplication of effort between civilian and military PSYOP

organizations, precisely the problems that President Johnson created JUSPAO to correct.

Two examples illustrate the difficulties: on 16 February 1969, a province PSYOP officer

dropped 84,000 leaflets without prior coordination with the military PSYOP officer in the

area, and military PSYOP teams on audiovisual or loudspeaker missions often found

province teams in the same hamlet on similar missions.[28] Further, all five of the PSYOP

commanders at battalion and group level confirmed in surveys conducted in 1969 that

"there was duplication of effort between Army PSYOP units and other agencies in each

CTZ due to lack of coordination and centralized control."[29] While these examples do not

indicate widespread or egregious issues caused by the lack of coordination between

JUSPAO, CORDS, and MACV PSYOP elements, they do indicate that JUSPAO still was

unable to correct all of the problems that had provided the impetus for their creation.

One of the root causes of insufficient coordination between province and military

PSYOP officers was often lack of experience on the part of either, and sometimes both.

Many PSYOP officers assigned to the provinces had prior experience; most USIS and

U.S. Army PSYOP officers fell into this category and many USIS officers (about 15

percent) had relatively extensive (42 weeks) training in the Vietnamese language.[30] Many

more of the assigned province PSYOP officers did not have prior experience in PSYOP,

a shortcoming made more difficult by the complexity of the task set out for them.

Lieutenant Colonel Harry Latimer, who served as a military PSYOP officer assigned to

JUSPAO, describes this difficult situation in his *Monograph*:

> Exercising substantive supervision of psychological operations within the
> province was a demanding task, for with major combat units on hand and
> primarily interested in battle, the writ of the civilian officer often did not run
> without difficulty. The caliber of U.S. military staff officers involved in
> psychological operations in combat units varied widely. … Some U.S. combat
> units floundered in psychological operations but were responsive, interested in
> assistance, and happy for channels of communication with the indigenous
> population, channels the staff of the province senior advisor could provide.[31]

Latimer describes examples, such as the U.S. 9th Infantry Division, whose difficulties in

relating with the local population caused additional problems for province PSYOP

officers. He goes on to say that most Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) units

habitually looted and abused civilians, singling out the ARVN 5th Division as a unit with

high combat effectiveness but a very poor civil-military relations record. ARVN units

such as this were the worst offenders, but U.S. units also failed to coordinate their

PSYOP or other activities with the province officer unless that officer sought the units

out and forced coordination by his presence.[32]

One significant exception to the coordination problems between Province and

military PSYOP elements appears to have been in Military Region 3 (MR3) where the 6th

PSYOP Battalion made significant efforts to foster good coordination between units and

the province teams. In fact, the 6th PSYOP Battalion attached a number of their

Audiovisual (HE) teams to the JUSPAO Province PSYOP officers to give the teams a

constant area of operations and provide a dedicated capability to the pacification effort.

The benefit to the 6th PSYOP Battalion appears to have been better access to interpreters for their HE teams.[33]

While changes were underway in JUSPAO and MACV through 1968, the 4th PSYOP Group was struggling internally to fill their expanded personnel authorizations and meet mission requirements that continued to grow.[34] Lieutenant Colonel William Beck, the first commander of 4th PSYOP Group, noted the continuing increase in mission requirements and predicted that the new group structure would be overwhelmed in late 1969 if the trend continued.[35] In addition, the 4th PSYOP Group did not fill all of their new authorizations until May 1968, six months after the group was formed. On 30 April 1968, the group had 141 of 168 officer positions filled (less than 84 percent) but only 90 of the 141 officers had PSYOP Training (less than 54 percent of 168).[36] Simultaneously, the PSYOP Group and each of the four PSYOP Battalions were struggling to modify their doctrinal structure to meet the requirements of their missions and areas of operations (see Appendix B for a description of doctrinal PSYOP structure and Appendix C for examples of how each PSYOP unit task-organized in Vietnam).

One significant effort to help resolve the coordination problem initiated by the 4th PSYOP Group in September 1969, with MACJ3-11, resulted in forming a national military PSYWAR coordination system. The most important element of this system was a monthly PSYWAR Policy Committee meeting chaired by MG Trung, the Chief of GPWD.[37] This action followed from the agreement reached on 22 February 1969 between 4th PSYOP Group and the GPWD to begin informal weekly meetings to coordinate national-level military PSYOP activities,[38] illustrating how long it sometimes took to cement lasting cooperation between U.S. and Vietnamese institutions.

The 8th PSYOP Battalion established a similar coordination center at Corps level in MR2 on 27 February 1969, and by June, all four military regions had a coordination center for PSYOP.[39] In a related effort to improve the effective of PSYOP products such as tapes and leaflets, the 7th PSYOP Battalion test and evaluation section established an office at the I Corps Regional *Chieu Hoi* Center in Danang. However, this office was more significant in the shared intelligence and coordination it conducted than its intended role to facilitate product testing and to gather information on the vulnerabilities of VC and NVA units.[40]

The 6th PSYOP Battalion in MR3 went even further to improve their structural arrangements with respect to Vietnamese and U.S. military and civilian PSYOP. Between August and October 1969, the battalion established a Combined Propaganda Development Center incorporating elements of the ARVN 30th POLWAR Battalion and the ARVN III Corps G5 section. They co-located this element with the Corps PSYOP Coordination Center to ease the coordination required for propaganda development, audience analysis, and testing and evaluation and to allow Vietnamese influence over message content, theme, and illustration, resulting in better products.[41] Although these arrangement did not resolve all of the coordination issues at province level and below, it did improve the situation.

Reflecting practices that had proven successful in previous years, the one program that received the most collaborative effort was *Chieu Hoi*. However, one effect of the 1968 Tet offensive was to derail plans for the customary *Chieu Hoi* Inducement campaign that in previous years had coincided with the holiday. The Tet attacks caused the numbers of *Hoi Chanh* to remain lower than expected for the first three months of

1968, but numbers began to increase again by April, possibly a result of VC attempts to replace losses with conscripts who were more susceptible to the stepped-up PSYOP campaign following Tet which publicized the heavy losses suffered by the VC. The last three months of 1968 saw a marked increase in the number of ralliers under Chieu Hoi, attributed by MACV to the Accelerated Pacification Campaign. Between October and December 1968, Chieu Hoi centers received 7,798 Hoi Chanh, bringing the total for the year to 18,271.[42] While this was a reduction from the 27,178 ralliers in the previous year, the promising results from the last quarter of 1968 seemed to indicate that the synergistic effect of combining combat action, pacification, and PSYOP could produce better results in 1969.

One of the most effective techniques military PSYOP teams used in *Chieu Hoi* inducement efforts was taped appeals by *Hoi Chanh* personalized to appeal to their former comrades. By 1968, an effective template for these appeals was established. First the Hoi Chanh would identify himself by name and mention his home village, the soldiers and unit he had been assigned to, and the area he had operated in. Having established his credibility, the *Hoi Chanh* would then state his reasons for rallying, how he had rallied, and how he had been received and treated. Finally, he would appeal directly to former unit members to join him.[43] These personalized appeals were most effective when used as closely as possible to the date of capture. Use of a system called "Earlyword" allowed PSOP teams on the ground to take appeals by Hoi Chanh and immediately broadcast them over aircraft-mounted loudspeakers through a radio link.[44] Later, the 10th PSYOP Battalion created a companion system to "Earlyword" called "Quick Tape." This system allowed the aircraft carrying the Earlyword system to tape a

broadcast from the ground team, and then fly to the target area for broadcasting,[45] releasing the aircraft from having to remain within the range of ground-based radios, limiting their mobility.

A related technique used by military PSYOP detachments to exploit opportunities, such as a cooperative rallier, was the Psychological Operations Exploitation Team (POET), consisting of an interpreter and a PSYOP specialist. A POET was able to record taped appeals, facilitate Earlyword broadcasts, and draft personalized leaflets to be dropped on the *Hoi Chanh*'s former unit.[46] This technique became so prevalent that 6th PSYOP Battalion reported 598 of 900 aerial missions in three months of 1969 were quick reaction missions and many of those involved the immediate diversion of Earlyword-capable aircraft to exploit *Chieu Hoi* ralliers.[47]

Because the early successes of the APC were responsible for the numbers of *Hoi Chanh* increasing over the last three months of 1968, GVN officials and American advisors looked forward to 1969 with optimism. In fact, a combination of U.S. and GVN efforts coupled with VC actions resulting from the 1968 Tet offensive would combine to make 1969 the high point of the *Chieu Hoi* program. The total number of *Hoi Chanh* received by year's end was 47, 023, more than doubling the 18,171 *Hoi Chanh* for 1968. Of the 1969 total, 28,037 were members of the military arm of the VC.[48] Given the military strength of the VC, estimated at 140,000 in 1969, this constitutes slightly more than twenty percent of total VC strength.[49]

Interestingly, the largest number of Hoi Chanh by far came from MR4, with 29,790 ralliers or more than 63 percent of the yearly total. The MACV *Command History* for 1969 attributes this to several factors. The primary reason for success nationwide and

in MR4 was due to the APC coupled with military efforts reaching into areas that the VC had firmly controlled in previous years. Specifically to MR4, the primary reason for rallying was low morale caused by military pressure. However, the VC program taking soldiers from village and hamlet guerrilla units and forcing them to fill the depleted ranks of main force and local force battalions also contributed to low morale and was a factor in the decision to rally for many *Hoi Chanh*.[50]

However, the long-term effects of negotiations to end the war and changes in military operational patterns did not always equate into improvements for PSYOP. In fact, while conditions seemed to be improving inside the borders of South Vietnam, the same factors detracted from the effectiveness of PSYOP directed outside the borders of South Vietnam. JUSPAO again issued specific guidance on how they wanted to take full advantage of President Johnson's address on 31 March 1968, announcing a unilateral halt to bombing attacks on North Vietnam, and the subsequent agreement reached between 3 and 8 April 1968 to begin negotiations. The most significant goals of this policy were to increase public confidence in GVN and ARVN, convince the population of North Vietnam that the North cannot win, and convince members of the VC and NVA that further resistance diminished their chances to live long enough to see peace.[51] However, while the first and last of these three objectives appears attainable, the second objective is spurious in that the population of North Vietnam had much less influence over decisions made in the North Vietnamese Politburo than the populations of western democracies had over decisions made by their governments.

The divisive campaigns intended to decrease North Vietnamese support for the Lao Dong Party Government, "Fact Sheet" and "Frantic Goat," provided the northern

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population with information about NVA and VC setbacks in the South that were not

available to them through state-controlled information sources.[52] "Frantic Goat" products

in particular highlighted the peace overtures of 1968 to depict the North Vietnamese

Communists as needlessly prolonging the war. This resulted in a strong

counterpropaganda effort by the North Vietnamese government, discrediting the PSYOP

leaflets as false rumors.[53] However, the effectiveness of PSYOP efforts against the north

was minimal for a number of reasons; the most significant that bombing attacks created a

sense of a common enemy that communist propagandists used to focus patriotic

sentiment. PSYOP efforts could not hope to diminish this patriotism because the

population was far more accessible to the North Vietnamese than to U.S. PSYOP

forces.[54] That PSYOP time and effort was devoted to an essentially unattainable

objective in the North detracted from the resources that could be brought to bear against

more attainable objectives in the South.

Despite the MACV assertion in their 1968 *Command History* that PSYOP "had

come to be recognized as an effective weapon in the military arsenal,"[55] there were still

military commanders who did not involve their PSYOP staff members in planning for

combat operations. In fact, a 4th PSYOP Group report from early 1968 identifies "selling

PSYOP" to supported units as necessary before PSYOP teams could begin planning

PSYOP missions.[56] However, the growing number of qualified PSYOP personnel

assigned to fill positions in the expanded 4th PSYOP Group structure, as well as the staff

advisory positions at MACV, JUSPAO, and in military headquarters down to brigade

level, resulted in increasing awareness of the realistic capabilities of PSYOP and

incorporation of PSYOP into combat plans. For example, MACPD successfully

coordinated in 1968 to harness the efforts of more than just the PSYOP force to perform face-to-face communications as part of the PSYOP effort.[57]

Brigadier General E. R. Ochs, commanding general of the 173rd Airborne Brigade, provides a compelling example of a unit using PSYOP to good effect in his debrief. The brigade's mission was to support accelerated pacification efforts in four northern districts of Binh Dinh Province. Forces assigned to the brigade focused their efforts on three main tasks: pacification, training RF/PF units, and destruction of the Viet Cong Infrastructure (VCI) in their area of operations (AO). Consequently, the brigade's PSYOP support focused their efforts toward the local civilian population, with PSYOP against enemy forces a secondary mission. Most importantly, the brigade focused PSYOP efforts on face-to-face (F2F) engagements, first accompanying Medical Civil Action Program (MEDCAP) missions and later through respected district officials. These engagements exploited incidents of enemy crimes against civilians or recent battlefield losses to promote a voluntary informant program. Exploiting these incidents was important because, as stated by BG Ochs, "an unfortunate incident such as a death or injury of a family member or fellow villager from a VC booby trap has a far heavier impact on the average Vietnamese farmer than an appeal to patriotism." The only shortcomings in the brigade's PSYOP employment evident in this debrief are the continued reliance on leaflet drops (averaging three per day) despite knowing that their loudspeaker broadcasts were much more effective, and failure to implement any long-term PSYOP plan, instead relying on immediate reaction through F2F engagements.[58] However, this example shows much better PSYOP employment than earlier examples between 1965 and 1967.

The example from the 173rd Airborne Brigade provides some evidence that combat commanders were gradually giving more credence to PSYOP as a tactical asset rather than an interesting sideshow. One MACV lessons learned report, stating "VC have proved to be most vulnerable to PSYOPS when they have suffered casualties in an engagement,"[59] concluded that PSYOP was not effective when used alone. The same report further stated that PSYOP was most effective when pre-planned and coordinated with artillery, air, and ground operations.[60] In other words, PSYOP was effective when integrated fully into tactical plans. However, Colonel Taro Katagiri, commander of 4th PSYOP Group from late 1968 to early 1970, asserted that many officers, including some PSYOP officers, still saw PSYOP as a separate and distinct function rather than a function to be integrated into the overall effort. He further stated that while many general officers understood the importance of integrating PSYOP, most Colonels and lower-ranking officers did not, citing a U.S. Brigade commander who stated that his *Chieu Hoi* program consisted of two 105mm Howitzers, one marked *Chieu* and the other marked *Hoi*.[61] Clearly not all officers in Vietnam were as enlightened in regard to employing PSYOP as BG Ochs and his staff at the 173rd Airborne Brigade were.

The Army Concept Team in Vietnam (ACTIV) conducted a study into the employment of PSYOP between December 1968 and March 1969. One of the preliminary steps of this study was an examination of the mission assigned to PSYOP forces. The 4th PSYOP Group's assigned mission at the time of the study was "to conduct psychological operations in support of joint and combined counterinsurgency operations and in support of other operations for which the US Army had responsibility."[62] While one PSYOP battalion commander interviewed by the ACTIV team considered the

mission too broad and unspecific considering the change in mission focus toward

pacification, the other three PSYOP battalion commanders and the group commander

considered the mission appropriate. The consensus opinion on the PSYOP mission

statement was that the unspecific mission statement afforded flexibility and latitude to

PSYOP commanders faced with wide differences in PSYOP requirements between

different areas of operation.[63]

Staff supervision of PSYOP was another inconsistency explored by the ACTIV

team. There were four U.S. commands equivalent to a Corps at the time of the ACTIV

survey, III Marine Amphibious Force (MAF) in First Corps Tactical Zone (I CTZ), First

Field Force Vietnam (I FFV) in II CTZ, II FFV in III CTZ, and the Delta Military

Assistance Command (DMAC) in IV CTZ. Each of these headquarters assigned a

different staff entity to provide supervision and planning support to PSYOP. III MAF

followed the relationship established by MACV, assigning PSYOP supervision to the G3,

while II FFV placed PSYOP under the G5, and both I FFV and DMAC placed PSYOP

under the staff deputy for CORDS.[64] However, again the survey of PSYOP commanders

stated that there was no need to standardize staff supervisory relationships because each

supported unit had unique missions and staff dynamics and because there was

standardization at division level, with PSYOP staff supervision uniformly assigned to the

G5.[65]

The unique nature of each of the PSYOP battalions' areas of operation also drove

each battalion to devise unique task organization. The ACTIV team documented the

prevalent feeling that the cellular team structure found in PSYOP doctrine had several

inherent weaknesses forcing each battalion to adapt their structure to meet mission

requirements. One of these needs was to create normal staff sections (S1, S2, S3, and S4) and another was a need for command and control of tactical, print, and maintenance elements.[66] The doctrinal structure for PSYOP units is shown in detail in Appendix B while the unique approaches each unit took to adapt doctrine to their mission is described in Appendix C.

The process of adapting PSYOP unit organization to meet mission requirements that routinely surpassed capabilities continued over the years. As Colonel Katagiri noted, the 4th PSYOP Group and subordinate battalions began to undergo troop reduction along with other troop formations in Vietnam.[67] Unit withdrawals also changed some command and control arrangements, especially for the 7th PSYOP Battalion which was transferred from III MAF to XXIV Corps on 9 March 1970, as the Marine Headquarters departed from Vietnam.[68] The announcements of U.S. troop withdrawals placed increased emphasis on PSYOP efforts to promote the effectiveness of ARVN forces that were replacing the departing American formations.[69] It also changed the emphasis some U.S. commanders placed on PSYOP, as shown in the following example from XXIV Corps.

Lieutenant General James Sutherland, commanding general of the U.S. XXIV Corps, noted in his debrief a growing resentment among the population in MR1, stating, "I feel the fact that we are pulling out is contributing materially to this resentment."[70] General Sutherland also noted disappointing results from Phoenix/*Phung Hoang* in MR1 because the local population viewed it as a U.S. rather than Vietnamese program.[71] Unfortunately, these are the only indications in his debrief that he was involved with efforts to monitor or shape Vietnamese public opinion. The small section of his debrief covering PSYOP focuses mainly on improvements to Vietnamese mass media (radio and

television) and printing capabilities. He mentions only two PSYOP efforts he calls
"major campaigns"; one to discourage farmers from providing rice to the VC and another
to encourage local Vietnamese to report mines and booby traps.[72] This report is
disappointing for two reasons. First, the process of turning over PSYOP tasks to the
Vietnamese should have encouraged more use of F2F influence efforts than mass media.
Second, U.S. PSYOP forces should have been actively working to find the causes for and
change the attitudes behind the resentment General Sutherland mentions in his report.
Instead, General Sutherland recommends building "enclaves in selected areas" and
limiting U.S. troop exposure to the population.[73]

At about the same time General Sutherland complains of Vietnamese resentment
toward U.S. troop withdrawals, Ernest and Edith Bairdain of Human Sciences Research,
Incorporated were conducting the most thorough and far-reaching study of PSYOP in
Vietnam. The efforts of the Bairdains' research team from September 1969 to January
1971 produced more than twenty reports on specific topics[74], a mid-term progress report,
and a two-volume final report that constituted the only serious, scientific, and complete
study into PSYOP effectiveness in Vietnam. In order to identify and measure results, the
Bairdains' researchers worked with U.S. PSYOP and Vietnamese POLWAR personnel
extensively and conducted surveys among VC and NVA *Hoi Chanh* and Prisoners of
War. The combination of this fresh approach to the problem and a research staff adequate
to the tasks of collecting and analyzing the large amount of data allowed the Bairdain
team to overcome what most up until then had seen as an insurmountable problem.[75]

The most important conclusions established in the Bairdains' study related to the
effectiveness of Chieu Hoi appeals in relation to combat operations. What the researchers

learned was that Chieu Hoi appeals, conducted independently from combat operations, took an incubation period of from one to two years to convince an individual to rally. Further, this result was only true for an individual who experienced a "series of unrewarding, frustrating, difficult, and intermittently dangerous experiences" along with the exposure to *Chieu Hoi* appeals. In other words, for VC who already suffered from poor morale, Chieu Hoi appeals alone took up to two years to produce a conviction to rally.[76] However, the study also discovered that Chieu Hoi appeals combined with strong military pressure produced "heightened suggestibility" to defection and, if presented with what appeared to be a safe method to rally, could produce nearly instantaneous results.[77]

The Bairdains' study also concluded that airborne loudspeakers and leaflets were the only media that consistently reached the VC and NVA targets but made it clear that these were not the most persuasive means available to influence those target audiences.[78] The study also concluded that PSYOP message influenced the decision to rally in about two-thirds of all *Hoi Chanh* interviewed.[79] However, the Bairdains' *Final Report*, published 25 May 1971, came too late to have great impact on the PSYOP force in Vietnam. The 10th PSYOP Battalion in IV CTZ had already inactivated more than a month before the report was published, and in the month after publication two more PSYOP battalions, the 6th and the 8th, were due to inactivate. The 7th PSYOP Battalion was the last PSYOP headquarters in Vietnam, inactivating on 21 December 1971.[80] Therefore, at the time the Bairdains' findings were published, the PSYOP force was primarily focused on turning over all of their operations to the Vietnamese POLWAR structure that would be left behind to carry on the PSYOP mission.

By October 1968, Vietnamese POLWAR forces under the GPWD consisted of five POLWAR battalions.[81] Four of these, the 10th, 20th, 30th, and 40th, were under the operational control of the four Vietnamese Corps Commanders in the First through Fourth (respectively) Corps Tactical Zones. The 50th POLWAR Battalion was located in Saigon under the operational control of the GPWD Chief to conduct operations in the Capital and function as a general reserve.[82] However, the POLWAR structure from top to bottom still suffered from the differences in priorities described in previous chapters. Where U.S. PSYOP and tactical unit commanders saw the VC/NVA and the Vietnamese local population as the most important target audiences for influence efforts, POLWAR units and staffs saw ensuring the loyalty of their own unit members as their first priority.

Colonel Katagiri in his debrief echoed many of the same complaints of his predecessor in command, Lieutenant Colonel Beck. For one, Colonel Katagiri complained that while POLWAR units conducted extensive work among ARVN soldiers and their family members, the amount of work devoted toward the local population hardly came close to the scope of U.S. PSYOP efforts. He also cited significant disparities in equipment authorization levels as a reason why POLWAR units were not ready to assume the mission from the U.S. PSYOP force. Colonel Katagiri concluded that Vietnamese POLWAR would have to change their doctrine and mission focus as well as receive additional equipment in order for them to be able to assume the PSYOP mission as the U.S. PSYOP force understood it, and he saw no indication that the Vietnamese GPWD was considering any such changes.[83]

Despite the limited prospects for success, PSYOP units in 1970 continued efforts to begin transitioning their missions to the Vietnamese, in part because ongoing troop

withdrawals were reducing the forces available in the U.S. PSYOP battalions. In one

transition effort, the 7th PSYOP Battalion, in April 1970, renamed its Joint Propaganda

Development Center the Combined Propaganda Development Section (CPDS),

integrating ARVN POLWAR personnel into the product development process and

allowing the gradual replacement of U.S. personnel with those from ARVN.[84] The 10th

PSYOP Battalion created a similar arrangement with the ARVN 40th POLWAR

Battalion. By February of 1970, the 10th PSYOP Battalion reported that the Vietnamese

Air Force (VNAF) conducted 60 percent of weekly aerial loudspeaker missions and

POLWAR soldiers were training in the battalion's printing facility.[85]

However, the disappointing results of the turnover of PSYOP activities to the

Vietnamese would have been predictable to Lieutenant Colonel Beck and Colonel

Katagiri, as the same problems persisted in the POLWAR force in 1971. Although the

departing PSYOP forces turned over their printing presses and other equipment to the

Vietnamese and an advisory force remained in place at the end of 1971, the GPWD and

POLWAR Battalions were unable to maintain a PSYOP program even closely

resembling what the 4th PSYOP Group had done.[86] In fact, the MACV 1971 *Command

History* cites "GVN failure to maintain the momentum of programs turned over by

Mission agencies" as the reason for failure to meet the 1971 goal of 9,000 *Hoi Chanh*,

with only 8,255 ralliers by years end.[87]

The ongoing evolutionary organizational and mission changes of the U.S. military

and civilian PSYOP entities provided numerous lessons learned for PSYOP professionals

and combat commanders, but still did not address a number of underlying flaws. First,

U.S. PSYOP attempted to do for the GVN what the GVN was either unwilling or unable

to do, and our prospects for crafting influential PSYOP products was bound for failure

for precisely that reason. PSYOP forces rightly shifted focus toward support to

pacification efforts as the tactical units they supported did so, but PSYOP and the rest of

the military force still could not convince the Vietnamese population to support the GVN.

Only the GVN itself could do that. Similarly, U.S. efforts to transfer their PSYOP

mission over to ARVN POLWAR was constrained by ARVN commanders who did not

see PSYOP as their priority. Therefore, the withdrawal of U.S. PSYOP forces by the end

of 1971 really marked the end of all PSYOP efforts in Vietnam other than limited efforts

among military staff and U.S. Mission entities, except for the Vietnamese POLWAR

efforts among their own troops and modest MOI efforts among the general population.

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CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

The effectiveness of military PSYOP in Vietnam is difficult to determine with exactitude and even more difficult to condense into a succinct explanation. This is due to the complexity of the tasks PSYOP performed, the numbers of interrelationships between participating organizations, and the lack of an objective system that could accurately measure PSYOP effectiveness. In the most general terms, the *Chieu Hoi* program stands out as an effective program because it provided PSYOP teams with a powerful appeal useful in tactical combat situations and because it was easy to measure numbers of returnees. Most importantly, Chieu Hoi was an effective PSYACT in that it was a real and functional program rather than a gesture or influence trick. However, *Chieu Hoi* suffered from the same shortcomings that limited the effectiveness of pacification programs, emphasizing the conclusion that U.S. PSYOP efforts could not substitute for actions that GVN had to take. In other words, the U.S. could not hope to convince the Vietnamese to support their government if that government could not inspire popular support by itself. Similarly, PSYOP efforts against North Vietnam were largely ineffective because the target audience was more accessible to their own government propagandists, U.S. PSYOP was less credible than communist messages, and the goals pursued by PSYOP were most likely unattainable.

More specifically, several points from PSYOP experience in Vietnam provide lessons salient to current operations under the aegis of the Global War on Terrorism. For one, the experiment with interagency organization that was JUSPAO constituted a conditional success that can be used as a template of sorts for future attempts to influence

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foreign target audiences in a counterinsurgency fight. Combining military and civilian influence efforts under one directive organization did not solve every problem it was intended to solve, but did improve the uncoordinated and fragmented efforts that preceded it. The point is further emphasized by the effect generated when CORDS was established in 1967, creating conflict between PSYOP support to pacification and other missions that persisted until 1969 when a more unified effort finally prevailed.

The continual process of PSYOP officers adapting an imperfect doctrine to a complex situation is also instructive, as is the evolution of efforts to quantify PSYOP effectiveness that finally produced meaningful measurements in the Bairdains' study, but also showed that there is not always a correlation between the ability to measure and importance. The development of a combined PSYOP planning and coordinating structure that included members of the host nation's equivalent PSYOP force is another point salient to current operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Finally, the realization that the full integration of PSYOP into all combat and civil-military operations is necessary for success may be the point with the greatest potential impact to current operations. This is because combat commanders of today share the tendency of their counterparts in Vietnam to marginalize supporting efforts that they do not fully understand or that cannot be easily measured. Overcoming that obstacle is the greatest challenge for PSYOP specialists of then and now.

Although it is generally agreed that *Chieu Hoi* appeals were the most effective of PSYOP programs, a deeper examination of the program itself can highlight why it was effective and how it may be used as an example for future use in other counterinsurgency situations. The reasons that the *Chieu Hoi* program was effective are closely related to the

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reasons the program never reached its full potential. It was effective because it did as it advertised. The program was real, not a showpiece, so appeals associated with the program had the built-in credibility of the program itself. PSYOP did not have to embellish or frame appeals in such a way as to avoid reference to detracting information. *Chieu Hoi* was a visible, verifiable symbol of the willingness of many in the Vietnamese Government to accept former members of the VC back into society.

However, that willingness and acceptance was not prevalent enough in all circles to allow the program to achieve everything it could have. Many in the GVN, especially in the ARVN, never really accepted Hoi Chanh back into society, so passive resistance was the program's biggest obstacle to success. The feeling among many that the former VC members were being rewarded for their betrayal of the government was well founded but also missed the point, because it was this reward that caused them to come in without a fight, potentially saving lives on both sides. This reward provided military PSYOP teams with a tool that had proven value on the battlefield. This reward represented a cost saving measure, not only in lives but also in currency, when compared with the costs associated with combat operations against the VC. However, the jealousy that was associated with the reward produced bitterness that prevented full acceptance of *Hoi Chanh*, and limited the *Chieu Hoi* program from reaching full potential, so perhaps a more vigorous effort on the part of GVN to counter this internal bitterness may have produced greater results.

Similarly, PSYOP support to pacification efforts were of mixed effectiveness mostly because the pacification programs themselves were of limited effectiveness. Advertising a failing program does not just have a negligible effect; it actually has a negative effect on the credibility of any other advertising done by the same agency.

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Therefore, promoting effective programs such as the ACP first had to overcome the

populations feeling over the preceding half-hearted, ineffective programs promoted

earlier. Overall, the ACP and related efforts were in and of themselves good PSYOP just

as *Chieu Hoi* was. However, corruption and inefficiency on the part of GVN officials

administering the programs did as much to ensure their ultimate failure as VC and NVA

attempts to sabotage success.

The fact that U.S. entities were attempting to persuade Vietnamese civilians to

support their own government, rather than having that government win their loyalty, also

limited PSYOP effectiveness. As Colonel Katagiri asserted in his debrief, an objective of

U.S. PSYOP was to sell GVN to the Vietnamese.[1] Barry Zorthian presented the

fundamental flaw in this objective in a speech delivered in 1971, after stepping down as

director of JUSPAO:

> There has to be effective communication but it cannot be effective through
> surrogate channels; the host government must be the communicator with its own
> tools through its own techniques in its own image.[2]

Latimer noted the same problem, citing differences between U.S. personnel and their

RVNAF and VIS counterparts over priorities as the reason why the U.S. lost patience

with the Vietnamese, began to communicate with the Vietnamese people in the name of

the Vietnamese government, and in effect tried to do the job for them.[3] Such attempts at

second-hand persuasion were handicapped by the lack of confidence inherent in the

argument, and may provide a lesson that can guide current U.S. efforts in Iraq and

Afghanistan.

Similarly, U.S. persuasion efforts in North Vietnam were mostly ineffective

because our arguments lacked credibility and the intended objective was unattainable.

Because the U.S. was viewed with suspicion as a foreign power, U.S. PSYOP leaflets could not match the credibility of North Vietnamese propaganda. PSYOP arguments also lacked credibility because they described North Vietnam's actions as outside aggression against the South Vietnam while most North Vietnamese viewed the war as a struggle to re-unify the country against a colonial invader. In addition, arguments written on a leaflet in most circumstances will be less persuasive than a personal speech by a local official. Further, reducing support for the war among the population of North Vietnam, even if successful, would have had little influence over decisions made by the North Vietnamese politburo. Appeals to civilians to stay away from bombing targets were similarly ineffective as the population often had little choice in the matter. PSYOP campaigns conducted against infiltrators in Laos and Cambodia enjoyed better credibility. The best of these programs set the stage for products these troops would see once they arrived in South Vietnam. However, the unrealistic expectation of the PSYOP campaign beyond South Vietnam was its chief shortcoming.

These unrealistic expectations were in most part a product of the flawed PSYOP command structure created under JUSPAO. However, judging this first attempt to create a workable interagency PSYOP entity by this and other minor failings is patently wrong. JUSPAO cannot be faulted for failing to fix all of the coordination and control problems it was created to address because JUSPAO did as good a job at it as could be done, given the resources it had to work with. The complexity of the organization was due mostly to the fact that it incorporated such disparate members as USIS, USAID, and military officers under one roof, with one boss. A more streamlined organization with better-defined lines of communication and clearly-delineated command authority would

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naturally have been better, but we have to remember that this was the first such entity ever created, and it was constructed under difficult conditions. It is better to give JUSPAO credit for what it accomplished and the problems it did address, and also to give the military PSYOP force credit for stepping in where it could to correct coordination problems at the province level and below.

The military PSYOP force did this without a doctrine that addressed the complexity of the situation that was reality in Vietnam. PSYOP doctrine provided a starting point but departure was necessary in Vietnam almost from the start. The innovations produced by the PSYOP force over the period of growth (65-67), the change in focus (68-69), and subsequent withdrawal (70-71) are extraordinary. Again, faulting the PSYOP force for failing to better involve their POLWAR counterparts is too easy and misses the important point that the POLWAR force had different priorities and was not trained or equipped to do the job of a U.S. PSYOP unit. However, the poor transition of tasks from PSYOP to POLWAR in 1971 is instructive in that it advocates more involvement and cooperation between U.S. PSYOP and host-nation counterparts in current conflicts to avoid the same mistake.

One reason that PSYOP had difficulty gaining full integration into combat unit planning was the difficulty in providing quantifiable measures of effectiveness. Reports from the entire time frame of U.S. PSYOP involvement in Vietnam lament the difficulty in measuring success, but some PSYOP officers felt that there was too great an emphasis on measuring effectiveness. Measuring PSYOP effectiveness was not an insurmountable problem. Some PSYOP effectiveness, such as *Chieu Hoi* appeals, was relatively easy to measure while measuring the effectiveness of efforts to promote malingering or passive

resistance among enemy soldiers is far more difficult. Even with access to the enemy's

reports and records, measuring amounts of feigned sickness in an organization is

probably impossible, but inability to measure effectiveness does not necessarily mean

that a PSYOP objective is not worth pursuing.

Colonel Harold Bentz, 7th PSYOP Group commander, states a similar case,

commenting on the difficulties of measuring PSYOP effectiveness and recommending

the use of indicators where hard and fast measurements are impossible.[4] General

Westmoreland also alluded to difficulties of measurement, asking if our *Chieu Hoi*

appeals caused the enemy to rally or was it because of other conditions or stimuli.

Certainly where conditions were bad and morale was worse due to FWMAF/RVNAF

successes, desertions were correspondingly higher.[5] Colonel Taro Katagiri, 4th PSYOP

Group commander, warned of the danger in over-analyzing while not understanding all

of the environmental conditions that may have had an effect.[6] For instance, the number of

Hoi Chanh in a particular area could have been higher in a given month just because it

rained more than was the norm, not because of any other factor. The lesson this provides

to the current PSYOP force is twofold, do not limit PSYOP objectives just because

measuring effectiveness will be difficult or impossible but at the same time, integrate the

gathering of all possible indicators of effectiveness into intelligence collection plans as

part of the full integration of PSYOP into combat plans.

The lack of that full integration of PSYOP into ongoing operations was the

greatest shortcoming of PSYOP in Vietnam. Barry Zorthian called this "the most

fundamental error of all: the identification of psychological operations as a separate

dimension of war, as an add-on, if you will, to the military and economic and political

policies under which the effort was conducted."[7] Zorthian argued for the complete integration of PSYOP into all operations and plans, in order to achieve the synergistic or mutually beneficial effects of what today are called lethal and non-lethal effects. In Vietnam, the emphasis on PSYOP from MACV resulted in PSYOP forces being made available to combat commanders in unprecedented numbers. Unfortunately, the lack of understanding of PSYOP on the part of those combat commanders resulted in PSYOP functioning more often than not as an adjunct rather than an integrated element of supported unit plans.

The emphasis on PSYOP from MACV also resulted in skeptical commanders pushing PSYOP into focusing on form over substance. In other words, most commanders were happy to report that they had dropped more leaflets this month than last month without any real regard for whether or not those leaflets had any effect. This resulted in ever-increasing demands for print products, outstripping the means at hand to produce and deliver the huge amounts of paper involved. According to Colonel Bentz, even as late as 1972 there was still a problem with a lack of understanding of PSYOP among U.S. Army officers, calling this "lack of understanding and appreciation for PSYOP" a major problem.[8] However, the synergistic effect of PSYOP integrated with military actions was, when it happened, the most effective way to influence behavior. The Bairdains' study most clearly showed the linkage between conditions and susceptibility in *Chieu Hoi* PSYOP appeals – either conditions in the short term or effects over time (up to two years) caused rallying. In other words, either two years of Chieu Hoi loudspeaker and leaflet appeals, or a rally appeal in conjunction with combat action that heightened susceptibility were required to convince VC to rally.[9]

Current U.S. efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan have clearly shown that the Global War on Terrorism requires an interagency approach incorporating all of the instruments of national power (diplomatic, information, economic, and military) to achieve success. This was clear in Vietnam as well[10], so the idea is not a new one. JUSPAO provides a model that, with modification based on lessons learned, can guide future interagency efforts to apply the information instrument of national power. More importantly, for military PSYOP officers, the experience of Vietnam holds many parallels with current operations, and the possible lessons Vietnam offers are many. The most important of these potential lessons is the understanding that a combined PSYOP structure with members of the host nation's military will pay great dividends in producing effective, influential PSYOP messages and ease the transition when U.S. forces depart. This combined structure, if extended into the interagency sphere, will also prevent attempts to act as a surrogate communicator for the host nation. Another important lesson provided by our PSYOP experience in Vietnam is that a PSYOP officer's ability to influence the actions of combat commanders is at least as important in the overall effort as any PSYOP campaign or product intended to influence a foreign target audience. In other words, the ability of the PSYOP force to integrate into every facet of a supported unit's activities is a critical prerequisite for success in the influence fight.

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[1]Taro Katagiri, *Senior Officer Debriefing Report: COL Taro Katagiri, CO, 4th Psychological Operations Group, Period 4 October 1968 to 13 March 1970* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 21 May 1970), 5.

[2]Barry Zorthian, *The Use of Psychological Operations in Combatting "Wars of National Liberation"* (National Strategy Information Center, 14 March 1971), 9-10.

[3]Harry D. Latimer, *Monograph on National Security Affairs: U.S. Psychological Operations in Vietnam* (Providence, RI: Brown University, September 1973), 6.

[4]Harold F. Bentz, Jr., *Senior Officer Debriefing Report: COL Harold F. Bentz, Jr., CDR, 7th Psychological Operations Group, Okinawa, 30 Nov 68 to 16 May 72* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 6 December 1972), 6.

[5]United States Mission to Vietnam, *Viet-Nam Documents and Research Notes: Document No. 56-57* (Saigon: Minister-Counselor for Public Affairs, April 1969), 56-57.

[6]Katagiri, *Senior Officer Debriefing*, 5.

[7]Quoted in: BDM Corporation, *A Study of Strategic Lessons Learned in Vietnam: Volume VI; Conduct of the War: Book 2; Functional Analyses* (McLean, VA.: The BDM Corporation, 2 May 1980), 13-23.

[8]Bentz, *Senior Officer Debriefing*, 2-3.

[9]Ernest F. and Edith M. Bairdain, *Final Technical Report: Psychological Operations Studies – Vietnam, Volume I* (Washington, D.C.: Advanced Research Projects Agency, 25 May 1971), 43-45.

[10]Joint United States Public Affairs Office, *General Briefing Book: JUSPAO Vietnam* (Saigon: JUSPAO, January 1966), 4-5.

GLOSSARY

Audiovisual Team: Refers to a Light Mobile Propaganda (Audio-Visual) Team. Under the PSYOP force cellular organization structure, this team was designated as a "HE team" or "team HE" (see chart detailing the cellular organization concept in Appendix B). These teams were "ideal for presenting propaganda on a person-to-person basis."[1]

*Chieu Hoi*: "Open Arms" Program – A program to encourage VC and NVA members to "rally" to the government side, to defect.[2]

Face-to-Face (F2F): PSYOP engagements between individuals using verbal and visual communications methods, often supported by print and other media products. Note that this is a contemporary definition used to describe a technique used more commonly in the later years of Vietnam.

*Hoi Chanh*: A former VC or NVA who had rallied to the government side under the *Chieu Hoi* Program.[3]

Joint United States Public Affairs Office (JUSPAO): Office established in 1965 as an inter-agency organization to direct all psychological operations in Vietnam.[4]

Loudspeaker Team: A Light Mobile (Loudspeaker Operations) Team, or HB team (see chart detailing the cellular organization concept in Appendix B), used man-portable or vehicle-mounted loudspeakers to disseminate PSYOP messages to support combat operations. Loudspeaker and Audiovisual teams were the PSYOP units who directly supported combat and pacification missions in Vietnam.[5]

Pacification: The military, political, economic, and social process of establishing or re-establishing local government responsive to and involving the participation of the prople.[6]

Political Warfare (POLWAR): A GVN term that includes motivation, propaganda, indoctrination, security and social welfare to create in friendly, neutral and enemy groups the emotions, attitudes, opinions and behavior which support the achievement of GVN national objectives.[7] The important distinction between POLWAR and PSYOP is that POLWAR focuses on internal as well as external audiences while PSYOP is focused exclusively on foreign target audiences.

PSYACT: Modern PSYOP term used to indicate an action planned to produce a psychological effect on a selected target audience. The term can also describe the effects of actions planned for another, usually tactical, purpose. Lieutenant Colonel Beck points out in his debriefing that "civic action is PSYOP 'of the deed'" showing that the idea of a PSYACT was understood at the time even though the modern term is not used.[8]

Propaganda: Any form of communication designed to influence the opinions, emotions, attitudes, or behavior of any group in order to benefit the sponsor, either directly or indirectly.[9] PSYOP personnel today shun the term propaganda due to the negative connotation it acquired primarily from Soviet and Nazi examples of misinformation used as a tool for influence.

Psychological Operations (PSYOP or PSYOPS): The planned use of propaganda and other measures to influence the opinions, emotions, attitudes, and behavior of hostile, neutral, or friendly groups in such a way as to support the achievement of national objectives.[10] The distinction of including "enemy, neutral, and friendly" groups in this definition is to distinguish psychological operations from psychological warfare, which only applies to the first category (*see next entry*).

Psychological Warfare (PSYWAR): The planned use of propaganda and other psychological actions having the primary purpose of influencing the opinions, emotions, attitudes, and behavior of hostile foreign groups in such a way as to support the achievement of national objectives (*emphasis added*).[11]

PSYOP Battalion: PSYOP battalions consist of a battalion headquarters and subordinate companies or smaller units. Many PSYOP capabilities, such as product development or printing functions, may reside no lower than the battalion level, depending on equipment available and functional organization. The 6th, 7th, 8th, and 10th PSYOP Battalions served in Vietnam.

PSYOP Group: PSYOP Groups control a number of subordinate PSYOP Battalions and separate detachments and companies. In Vietnam, 4th PSYOP Group commanded four subordinate PSYOP battalions and 7th PSYOP Group, with one battalion and several detachments, provided support from Okinawa.

USIA – United States Information Agency: Agency established by President Eisenhower on 3 August 1953 but tracing its history to the Office of War Information in World War II.[12]

USIS – United States Information Service: The overseas component of USIA.

Viet Cong Infrastructure (VCI): Viet Cong clandestine organization hiding among the Vietnamese population, conducting propaganda, surveillance, and governance functions.[13]

VIS – Vietnamese Information Service: The field agency of the Vietnamese Ministry of Information (MOI).[14]

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[1]Department of the Army, Department of the Army Field Manual 33-5, *Psychological Operations: Techniques and Procedures* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 20 October 1966), 59.

[2]Harry D. Latimer, *Monograph on National Security Affairs: U.S. Psychological Operations in Vietnam* (Providence, RI: Brown University, September 1973), 127.

[3]Ibid., 127.

[4]Ibid., 128.

[5]Department of the Army, Field Manual 33-5, 58

[6]Joint United States Public Affairs Office, *PSYOP POLICY: Policy Number 53 – PSYOP Support of Pacification* (Saigon: JUSAPO Planning Office, 22 January 1968), 47.

[7]Military Assistance Command Vietnam, *MACV Directive Number 10-1: Organization and Functions – Psychological Operations (RCS: MACPD-O3(R-1))* (Saigon: MACPD, 11 December 1967), Annex A.

[8]William J. Beck, *Senior Officer Debriefing Program: Report of Lieutenant Colonel William J. Beck* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 31 January 1969), 7.

[9]Ernest F. Bairdain, Edith M. Bairdain, *Final Technical Report: Psychological Operations Studies – Vietnam*, vol. 1 (Washington, D.C.: Advanced Research Projects Agency, 25 May 1971), 6.

[10]Ibid., 6.

[11]MACV, *Directive Number 10-1*, Annex A.

[12]BDM Corporation, *A Study of Strategic Lessons Learned in Vietnam: Volume VI; Conduct of the War: Book 2; Functional Analyses* (McLean, VA.: The BDM Corporation, 2 May 1980), 13-1.

[13]Richard A. Hunt, *Pacification: The American Struggle for Vietnam's Hearts and Minds* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995), 3, 6.

[14]Latimer, *U.S. Psychological Operations in Vietnam*, 129.

APPENDIX A

CHRONOLOGY OF PSYOP IN VIETNAM

| | |
|---|---|
| 27 April 1960 | CINCPAC directs deployment of psychological warfare (PSYWAR) personnel to Vietnam |
| 8 February 1962 | U.S. Military Assistance Command Vietnam (USMACV) created with headquarters in Saigon |
| February 1962 | First PSYWAR Mobile Training Team (MTT) arrives in Vietnam |
| March-April 1962 | Strategic Hamlet Program launched |
| April 1963 | *Chieu Hoi* Program announced |
| 2 November 1963 | Diem assassinated, period of government instability begins |
| 8-9 March 1965 | Elements of 3rd Marine Division land near Da Nang |
| 3-12 May 1965 | 173rd Airborne Brigade arrives in Vietnam |
| 14 May 1965 | Formation of the Joint U.S. Public Affairs Office (JUSPAO) announced in U.S. Embassy Instruction VN 186 |
| 22 July 1965 | 1st Provisional PSYOP Detachment ordered to Vietnam by U.S. Army Broadcasting and Visual Activity Pacific (USABVAPAC) |
| 2 September, 1965 | 24th PSYOP Detachment (USARPAC) arrives in Qui Nhon. |
| 23 October 1965 | 1st Cavalry Division operations in the Ia Drang Valley begin |
| 7 February 1966 | 6th PSYOP Battalion activated at Tan Son Nhut |
| 10 February 1966 | 244th, 245th, and 246th Tactical Propaganda Companies activated at Nha Trang, Pleiku, and Bien Hoa respectively |
| 19 November 1966 | 19th PSYOP Company (Advice and Support) activated at Can Tho |
| 4 May 1967 | Ambassador Robert W. Komer becomes General Westmoreland's Deputy for Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) |

| | |
|---|---|
| 3 September 1967 | General Nguyen Van Thieu elected President of South Vietnam |
| 1 December 1967 | 6th PSYOP Battalion redesignated 4th PSYOP Group<br>244th PSYOP Company redesignated 7th PSYOP Battalion<br>246th PSYOP Company redesignated 8th PSYOP Battalion<br>19th PSYOP Company redesignated 10th PSYOP Battalion |
| 5 December 1967 | 245th PSYOP Company redesignated 6th PSYOP Battalion |
| 30 January 1968 | Tet Offensive begins |
| 10 April 1968 | President Johnson announces that General Creighton Abrams will succeed General Westmoreland as COMUSMACV in June |
| 13 May 1968 | Delegates from the U.S. and North Vietnam hold their first formal meeting in Paris |
| November 1968 | Richard M. Nixon elected president with promise for "peace with honor" |
| 25 January 1969 | Formal truce negotiations begin in Paris |
| 30 April 1969 | Peak U.S. troop strength in South Vietnam: 543,482 |
| 8 June 1969 | President Nixon meets with President Thieu at Midway; announces the planned withdrawal of 25,000 U.S. combat troops |
| 29 August 1969 | Withdrawal of first 25,000 troops completed |
| 4 September 1969 | Ho Chi Minh dies |
| 16 September 1969 | President Nixon announces that he will withdraw an additional 35,000 troops |
| 15 December 1969 | President Nixon announces that an additional 50,000 American troops will be withdrawn by 15 April 1970 |
| 15 October 1970 | President Nixon announces that a further 40,000 American troops would be withdrawn by the end of the year |
| 7 April 1971 | President Nixon announces that 100,000 American troops will leave South Vietnam by the end of the year |
| 16 April 1971 | 10th PSYOP Battalion inactivated |

| | |
|---|---|
| 26 June 1971 | Last Marine combat unit departs South Vietnam |
| 26 June 1971 | 8th PSYOP Battalion inactivated |
| 30 June 1971 | 6th PSYOP Battalion inactivated |
| 2 October 1971 | 4th PSYOP Group inactivated |
| 12 November 1971 | President Nixon announces that an additional 45,000 American troops will leave South Vietnam during December and January |
| 21 December 1971 | 7th PSYOP Battalion inactivated; last PSYOP headquarters departs Vietnam |
| 13 January 1972 | President Nixon announces withdrawals to reduce American strength in South Vietnam to 69,000 by 1 May |
| 30 March 1972 | PAVN launches Nguyen Hue Campaign (also known as the Easter Offensive) |
| 8 April 1972 | Siege of An Loc begins |
| 29 August 1972 | President Nixon announces withdrawal to reduce U.S. strength in South Vietnam to 27,000 by 1 December |
| 27 January 1973 | Paris Peace Accords signed |

APPENDIX B

PSYOP DOCTRINAL ORGANIZATION

U.S. Army PSYOP doctrine organized psychological operations units with a
cellular structure intended to facilitate task organization for varied missions. Individual
cells, called teams, bore a two-letter designator for identification, subdivided three
categories. The first two categories, command/control and supply/maintenance, are
detailed in Table 1 while operational teams are detailed in Table 2.

| Table 1. PSYOP Cellular Organizational Structure: Command and Control, Supply and Maintenance Teams | |
|---|---|
| Team Designation | Team Description |
| AA | Company Headquarters: suited for support of a corps, separate division, or other command such as Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG), United States Information Service (USIS) Mission, Special Action Force, or Joint Unconventional Warfare Task Force. |
| AB | Battalion Headquarters: used to support a field army or a civil affairs command in a communications zone. |
| AC | Group Headquarters: designed to provide psychological operations support to a theater army. This team can plan, manage, and supervise a strategic psychological operations program. |
| BA | Supply and Maintenance: capable of providing supply and maintenance functions not provided in the command and control elements discussed above. |

Source: Department of the Army, Department of the Army Field Manual 33-5,
*Psychological Operations: Techniques and Procedures* (Washington, D.C.: Department
of the Army, 20 October 1966), 53-56.

There is a clear mismatch between the intended doctrinal support relationships

published in *Field Manual 33-5* in 1966, and those evolving in Vietnam at about the same

time. Ultimately, the PSYOP force in Vietnam formed into a group headquarters (team AC) at the equivalent of field army level, rather than the battalion headquarters (team AB) advocated in *Field Manual 33-5*. Similarly, after 1967 four battalions provided PSYOP support to each military region (equivalent to a corps), rather than the company headquarters (team AA) that PSYOP doctrine prescribed.

| Table 2. PSYOP Cellular Organizational Structure: Operational Teams | |
|---|---|
| Team Designation | Team Description |
| FA | Propaganda (Operations): has the capability to work alone or supervise the work of a selective mix of teams FB, FC, FD, or FE. |
| FB | Propaganda (Audio): develops sound tape propaganda messages for use in radio broadcasting or with loudspeakers. |
| FC | Propaganda (Current Intelligence): provides intelligence support and keeps the FA team informed about intelligence obtained by supported unit intelligence sections; supplements combat intelligence efforts. |
| FD | Propaganda (Research and Analysis): provides research and analysis capabilities beyond those of the FA team; designed for use in the planning phase producing detailed target audience studies. |
| FE | Propaganda (Graphic): consists of writers and illustrators to develop propaganda leaflets, newssheets, proclamations, and posters. |
| GA | Publication (Operations): supervises the activities and coordinates the activities of one GB, GC, and GD team. |
| GB | Publication (Processing): trims, cuts, rolls, packages, and otherwise prepares printed propaganda material for dissemination by aircraft, tube artillery, or other means. |
| GC | Publication (Camera and Plate): produces the photolithographic plates used by the offset presses of the GD team. |
| GD | Publication (Press): prints propaganda leaflets and other printed media to specification; should collocate with the GC team. |
| HA | Light Mobile (Operations): designed to provide operational supervision over "H" series teams, light, streamlined organizations with the skills and equipment to support tactical psychological operations in support of indigenous, counter-insurgent operations or a Joint Unconventional Warfare Task Force (JUWTF). |

| Team Designation | Team Description |
|---|---|
| HB | Light Mobile (Loudspeaker Operations): designed for man-portable or vehicle-mounted tactical loudspeaker operations using live or taped audio propaganda in support of combat units. |
| HC | Light Mobile (Printing and Processing): provides highly mobile printing and processing capability for production of propaganda leaflets and newssheets; should collocate with the HD team. |
| HD | Propaganda (Light Mobile Operations): capable of turning out propaganda in limited quantities, the HD team reflects the same basic capabilities of an entire set of "F" series teams, but concentrated in one team for quick application. |
| HE | Propaganda (Audio-Visual): equipped with a public address system to address rallies or crowds and equipment to show films or film strips; ideal for presenting propaganda on a person-to-person basis in consolidation operations. |
| IA | Mobile Radio (Operations): designed to supervise "I" series teams. |
| IB | Mobile Radio (Radio News): provides the capability to monitor hostile propaganda radio programs and assist in analyzing the effects of our own propaganda. |
| IC | Mobile Radio (Engineering): composed of technical and audio specialists to operate one shot- or medium-wave radio transmitter; as many as five IC teams can be organized under one IA team. |
| ID | Mobile Radio (Production): provides limited capability to produce original radio programs in support of psychological operations. |
| JA | Printing (Operations): provides supervision of fixed printing operations; normally configured with one JB, JC, and JD team. |
| JB | Printing (Camera and Plate): conducts process photography and platemaking in support of the heavy offset press in team JC. |
| JC | Printing (Heavy Press): capable of producing 60 million leaflets per month; cannot function without the support of a JB team; requires one BA team in support to provide direct support maintenance. |
| JD | Printing (Processing): prepares printed material for shipment to the dissemination agency. |
| KA | Consolidation (Operations): consolidation teams are designed primarily to support civil affairs and military police prisoner of war commands and selected teams can support counter insurgent operations; teams are heavily equipped and designed to operate in liberated or occupied areas without mass media capabilities. |
| KB | Consolidation (Motion Picture): has the capability to operate a motion picture installation in a supervisory or advisory role to indigenous personnel. |
| KC | Consolidation (Printed Media): has the basic capability to supervise the operation of a newspaper or other publication plant. |

| Team Designation | Team Description |
|---|---|
| KD | Consolidation (Radio): can operate a single, fixed radio broadcast station and make limited repairs on broadcast equipment. |
| KE | Consolidation (Distribution): performs the same functions as the shipping department of a modern newspaper plant. |
| KF | Consolidation (Display): can supervise the posting of proclamations, banners, signboards, window displays, bulletin boards, and other means to bring printed material to the attention of the public. |
| LA | Ideographic Composing Machine: operates and maintains an Ideographic Composing Machine; a device developed by the Army for reproducing mass quantities of materials printed in Chinese. |

Source: Department of the Army, Department of the Army Field Manual 33-5, *Psychological Operations: Techniques and Procedures* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 20 October 1966), 56-61.

APPENDIX C

PSYOP TASK ORGANIZATION

The following figures and tables illustrate how PSYOP units in Vietnam

organized to resolve shortcomings in the cellular doctrine and to meet the specific needs

of their area of operations and supported headquarters. The cellular doctrine described in

Appendix B partly survives but over time is seen less and less. This trend begins with the

first attempt by the 6th PSYOP Battalion S3 to propose a Modified Table of Organization

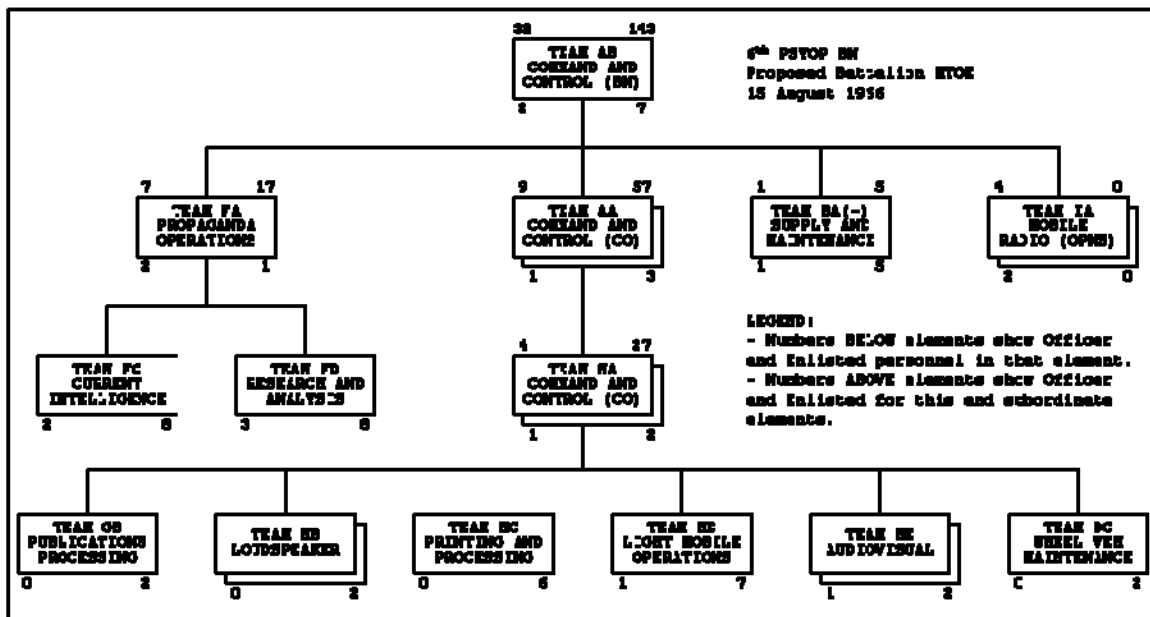and Equipment (MTOE) using the cellular structure shown in figure 1.



Figure 1.   Proposed PSYOP Battalion MTOE: 15 August 1966
*Source:* 6th Psychological Operations Battalion, *Operational Report – Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 6th Psychological Operations Battalion* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 2 November 1966), Inclosure 2.

The battalion structure in figure 1 was intended to replace each of the four

PSYOP Companies that, in 1966, had an authorized strength of 60 soldiers and operated

in each of the four Corps Tactical Zones (CTZs). Figure 2 shows the proposed structure

for a PSYOP Group to provide command and control and PSYOP support to the four
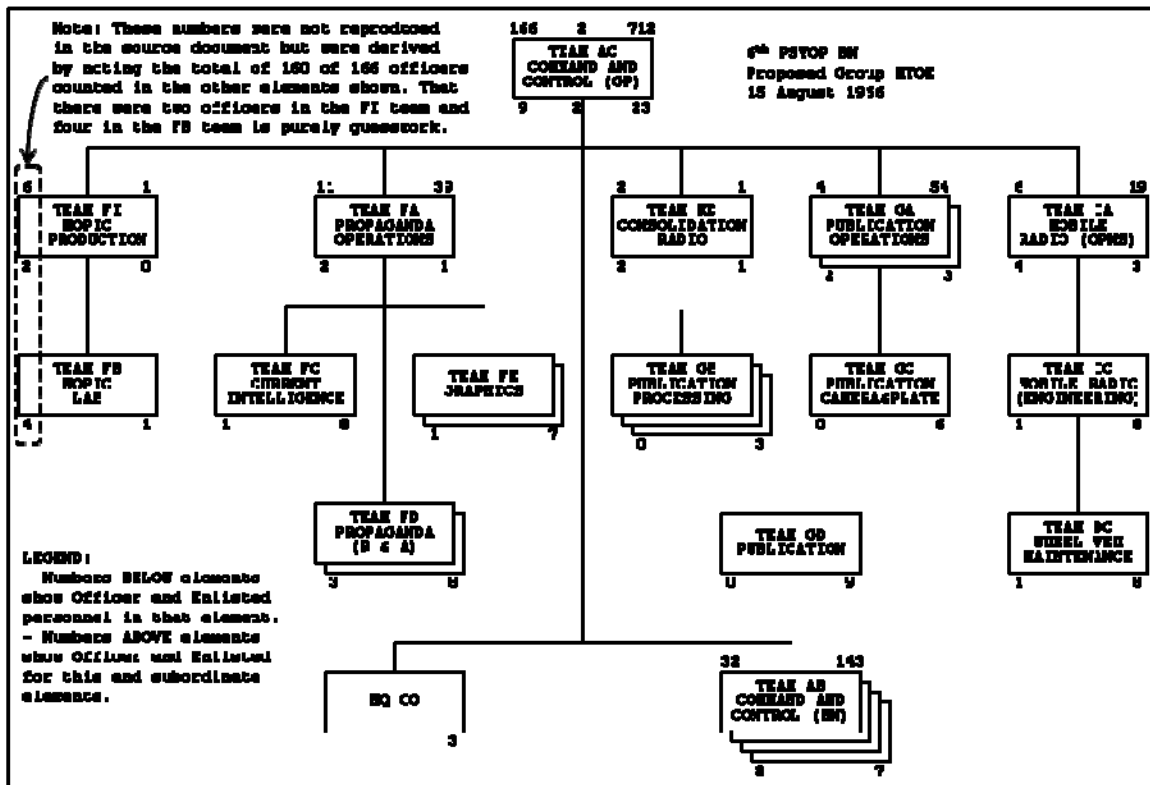
proposed battalions.

Figure 2.    Proposed PSYOP Group MTOE: 15 August 1966
*Source:* 6th Psychological Operations Battalion, *Operational Report – Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 6th Psychological Operations Battalion* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 2 November 1966), Inclosure 1.


These two MTOE proposals constitute a last attempt to force the cellular structure

into fitting the situation on the ground. One reason for this cited by the 7th PSYOP

Battalion was that the cellular structure lacked any structure to perform the functions of a

battalion S1 (Personnel) or S3 (Operations & Training). The same unit also cited a need

for a headquarters company for administrative matters and an air operations section to

coordinate leaflet drops. The shortcomings of the cellular structure continued to impact

the PSYOP force after the creation of 4th PSYOP Group. The group headquarters and

each of the four battalions adapted the cellular structure to meet the unique nature of their
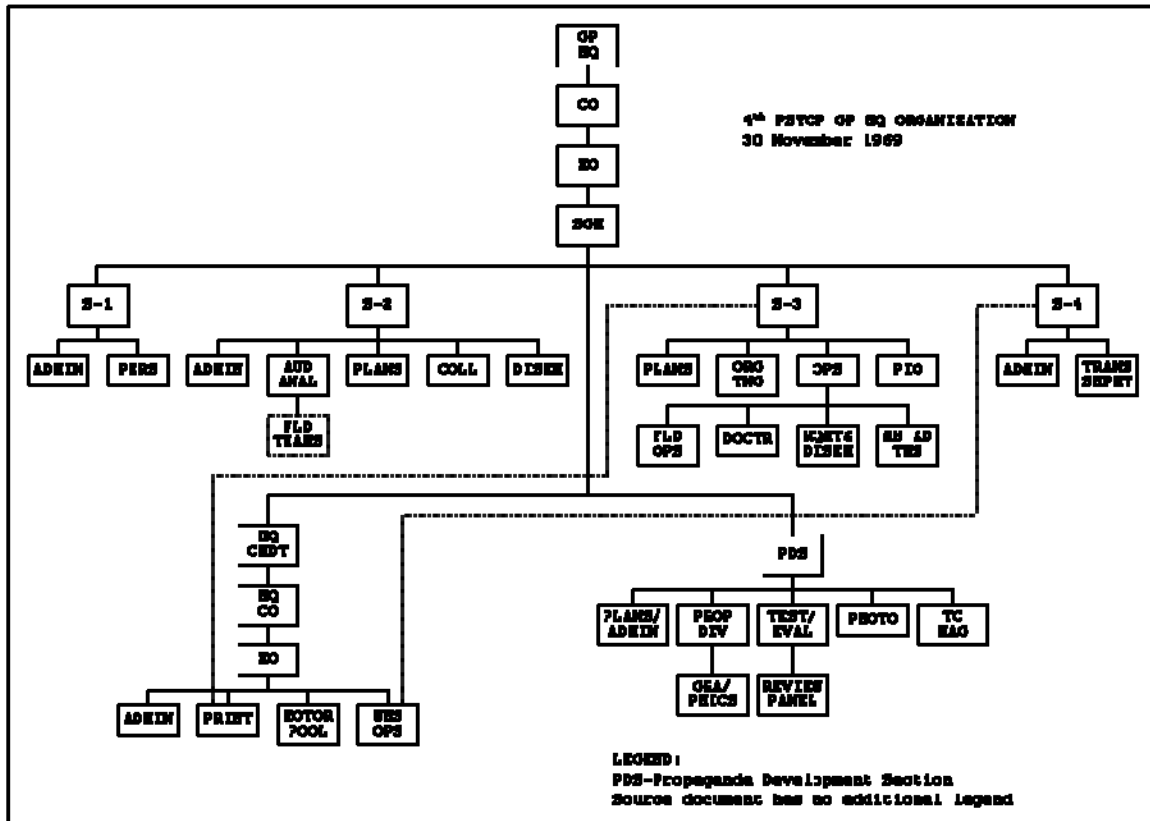
areas of operation, as shown in figures 3 to 7.



Figure 3.   4th PSYOP Group as of 30 November 1969
*Source:* 4th Psychological Operations Group. *Operational Report – Lessons Learned, Headquarters 4th Psychological Operations Group, Period Ending 31 October 1969* Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 30 March 1970, 13 (Incl 1).

The 4th PSYOP Group structure shown in figure 3 reflects some of the unique aspects of their mission, such as the high volume of print production required to meet requests above the capability of battalion print sections to fill. The group also had a robust product development capability and a well-organized S2 section to provide intelligence needs and collect indicators of effectiveness.
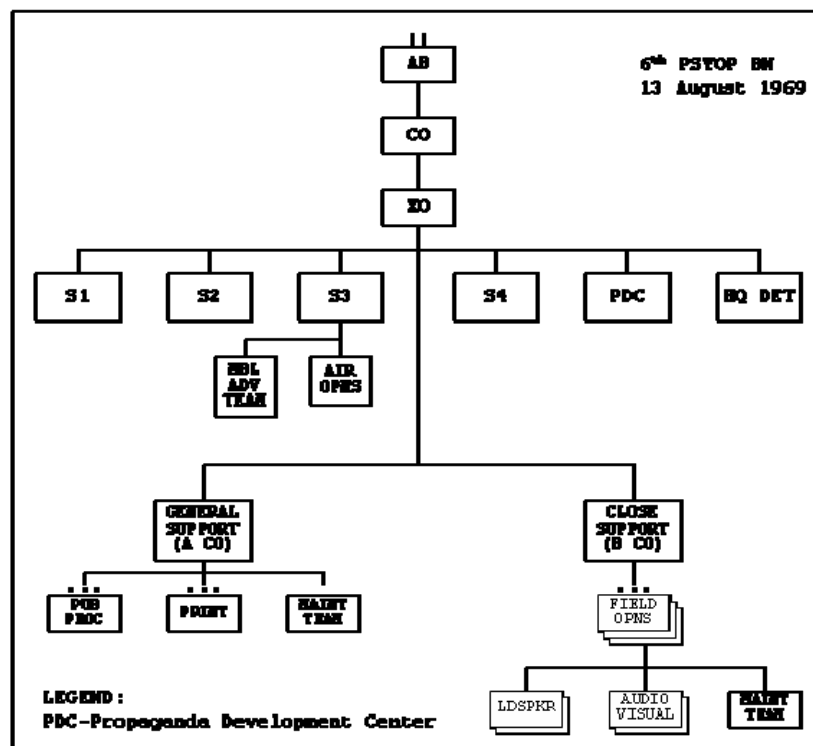


Figure 4.   6th PSYOP Battalion as of 13 August 1969
*Source:* 4th Psychological Operations Group. *Operational Report – Lessons Learned, Headquarters 4th Psychological Operations Group, Period Ending 31 July 1969* Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 5 December 1969, 26.

Figure 4 shows that the 6th PSYOP Battalion created the four staff sections normally present in a battalion along with a Product Development Center (PDC) as a separate entity. Each of the four PSYOP battalions subordinate to 4th PSYOP Group adopted this arrangements for their PDC, making it a separate entity comparable to normal staff elements and presumably supported by the rest of the battalion staff. Unique to the 6th PSYOP Battalion organization is the headquarters detachment which in most units would handle day-to-day administrative matters. Another unique entity on the 6th PSYOP Battalion staff is the Mobile Advisory Team subordinate to the S-3 section. The source diagram itself does not provide any detail on the size or functions of this element, but the fact of its inclusion in the staff organization may indicate the importance to the battalion of their advisory effort. The legacy of H-series teams is evident in the structure of B Company (Close Support) while the battalion consolidated print operations in A Company (General Support). Two of the other three battalions adopted similar arrangements to this in segregating tactical PSYOP detachments and teams into one company and print production assets into another.
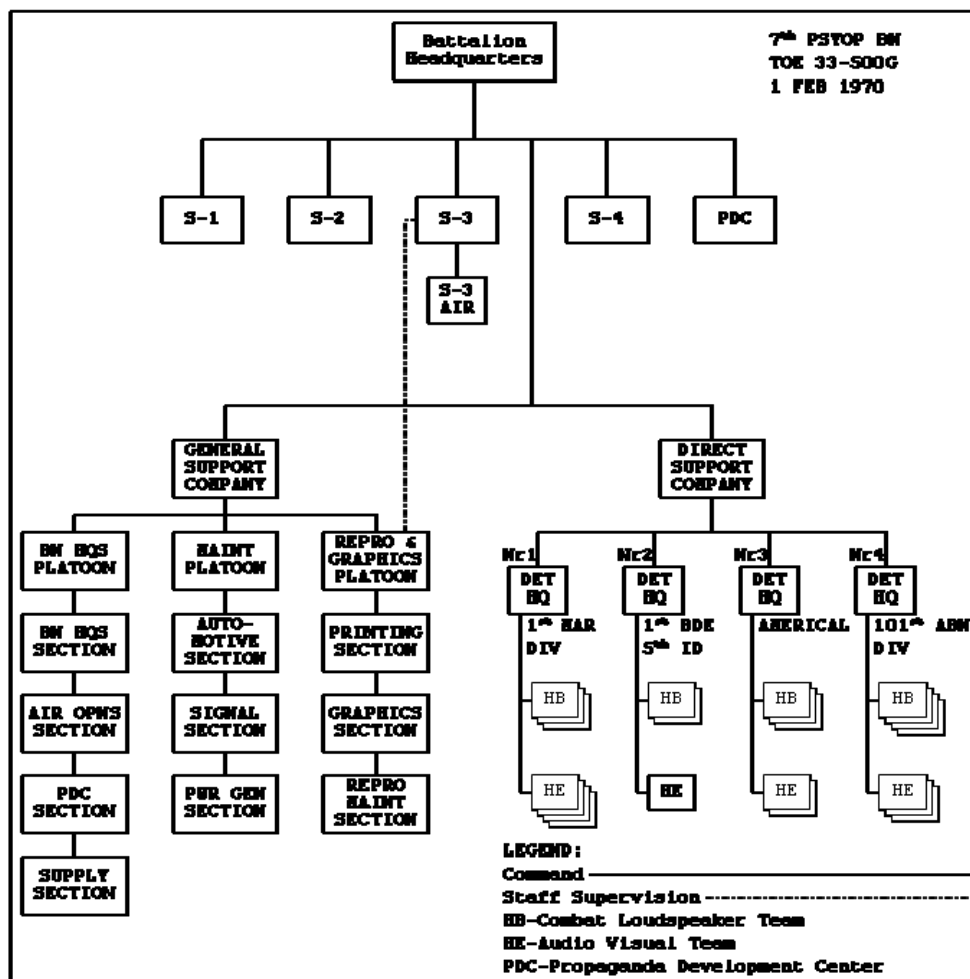
Figure 5.   7th PSYOP Battalion as of 1 December 1969
*Source:* 7th Psychological Operations Battalion. *Operational Report – Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 7th Psychological Operations Battalion, Period Ending 31 January 1970* Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 19 May 1970, 14 (Incl 1).

The 7th PSYOP Battalion implemented MTOE 33-500G on 1 December 1969, and figure 5 shows their task-organization on 1 February 1970. There are two key differences between the 7th Battalion's organization and that adopted by the 6th Battalion. First, the headquarters detachment for the 7th is subordinated to the General Support

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Company. Second, the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion has task-organized their H-series teams, providing

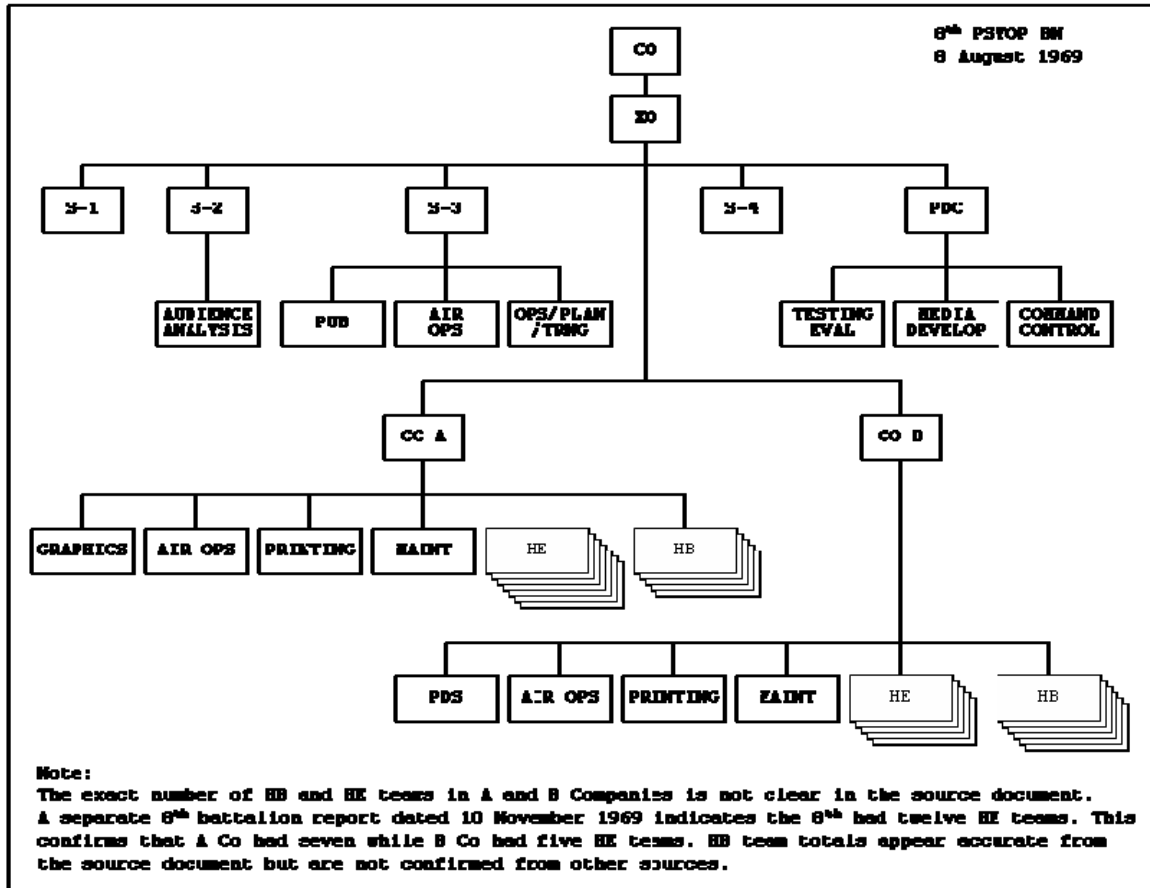more teams to support the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine and 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Divisions.



Figure 6.   8<sup>th</sup> PSYOP Battalion as of 8 August 1969
*Source:* 4<sup>th</sup> Psychological Operations Group. *Operational Report – Lessons Learned, Headquarters 4<sup>th</sup> Psychological Operations Group, Period Ending 31 July 1969* Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 5 December 1969, 52.

The 8<sup>th</sup> PSYOP Battalion, as shown in figure 6, took a different approach to their

task organization, dividing their tactical PSYOP and printing functions across two

companies. The 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion also did away with the detachment headquarters so all of

their teams reports directly to the company commander. Since the span of control this would create is excessive, this organization may indicate that the H-series teams had a closer relationship with their supported units than with their parent company headquarters. Possibly, difficulties in transporting printed products in the mountainous areas of MR2 may have prompted the battalion to disperse their print capability down to the company level. In addition, the areas of operation assigned to supported units and the radio station located with B Company in Pleiku may both have influenced the decisions behind the pictured task organization. Another unique aspect of the 8th PSYOP Battalion's organization is the Command and Control element located subordinate to the PDC. This indicates that the PDC did more than just develop products, exercising some supervisory role over PSYOP activities in the field. Also, the 8th PSYOP Battalion incorporated test and evaluation functions into their PDC while other battalions chose to make this a S-2 activity. What is clear, however, is that the 8th PSYOP Battalion faced obstacles unique to their area and devised an organizational structure to adapt to the situation they faced on the ground.
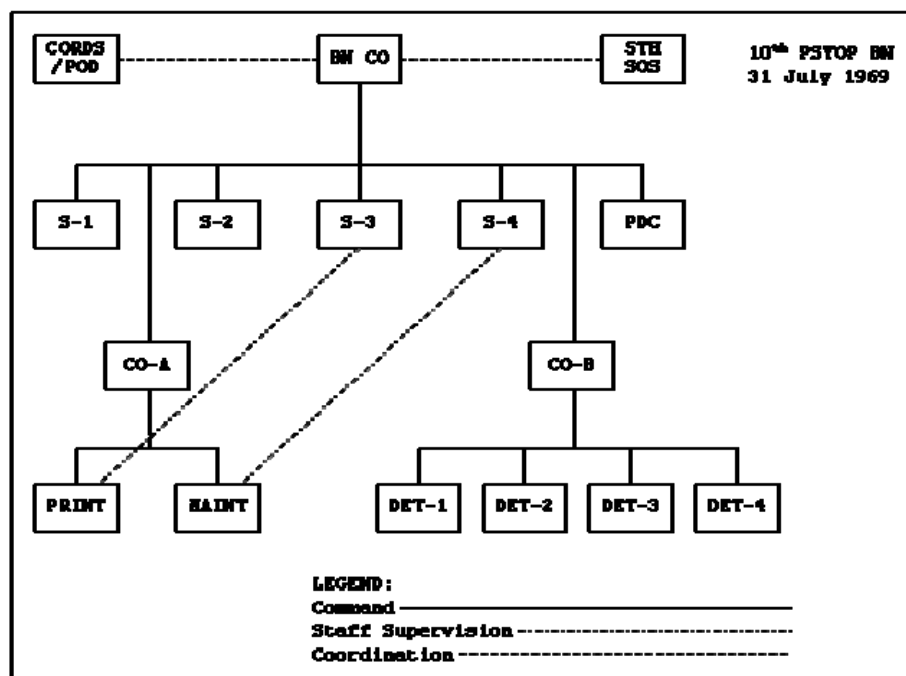
```
CORDS                    BN CO                    STH
/POD                                              SOS

                                                  10th PSYOP BN
                                                  31 July 1969

   S-1      S-2      S-3      S-4      PDC


            CO-A                       CO-B


   PRINT    MAINT      DET-1   DET-2   DET-3   DET-4

LEGEND:
Command ─────────────────────────
Staff Supervision ---·---·---·---·---·---·---
Coordination --------------------------
```

Figure 7.   10th PSYOP Battalion as of 31 July 1969
*Source:* 4th Psychological Operations Group. *Operational Report – Lessons Learned, Headquarters 4th Psychological Operations Group, Period Ending 31 July 1969* Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 5 December 1969, 59.


Unfortunately, the 10th PSYOP Battalion did not provide an organizational

diagram as detailed as those produced by other battalions. Potentially, the 10th PSYOP

Battalion's area of operations in MR4 could have produced a structure as unique as that

of the 8th PSYOP Battalion due to the numerous inland waterways of the Mekong River

Delta. However, the structure of the 10th PSYOP Battalion is very similar to the 6th and

7th battalions. The one unusual aspect of the structure shown in Figure 7 is the inclusion

of coordination lines leading from the battalion commander to the CORDS and POD staff

branches and to the 5th Special Operations Squadron (SOS), the U.S. Air Force unit that

conducted leaflet drops and aerial loudspeaker missions in MR4.

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| US PSYOP Battalion | ARVN POLWAR Battalion |
|---|---|
| 175 personnel | 200 personnel |
| 6 printing presses | 1 printing press |
| 8 field teams (teams HB and HE) | 3 field teams |
| None | Cultural drama teams |
| Propaganda Development Center | None |
| Sociologists & psychologists | None |
| Lesser skills (journalists, script writers) | Usually none |
| PSYOP logistical system | None effective |
| PSYOP intelligence processing system | None apparently effective |
| Mobile advisory teams | None |
| Skills training system (CONUS) | None |
| Access to higher & off-shore resources | No such access |

Table 3.    Comparison of US and ARVN Battalions

Source: William J. Beck, *Senior Officer Debriefing Program: Report of Lieutenant Colonel William J. Beck* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 31 January 1969), 24 (Incl 1).

For purposes of comparison, Table 3 shows the structural differences between a U.S. PSYOP battalion and an ARVN POLWAR battalion in 1968. Lieutenant Colonel Beck included this comparison in his *Senior Officer Debrief* to point out that the two forces were not compatible, that the ARVN structure had far less capability to influence mass audiences, even if ARVN commanders determined that the mission took precedence over ensuring the loyalty of his own soldiers. Significantly, Beck describes a 1968 PSYOP battalion as having eight field teams (HB and HE) while the unit diagrams from 1969 and 1970 show as many as 22 such teams in a PSYOP Battalion, an even more significant gap in capabilities between the U.S. and ARVN.
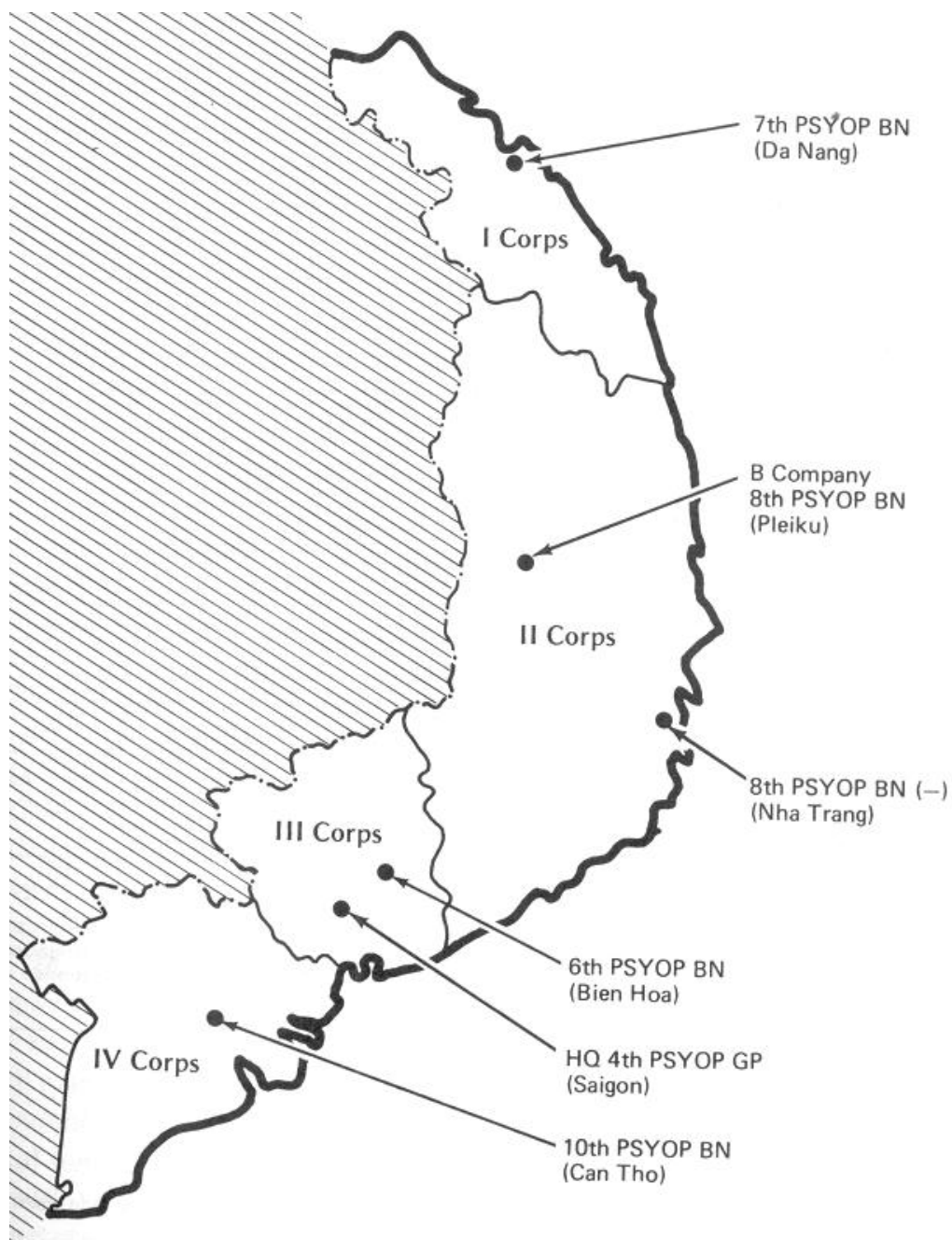
APPENDIX D

MAP OF PSYOP UNIT LOCATIONS



7th PSYOP BN
(Da Nang)

I Corps

B Company
8th PSYOP BN
(Pleiku)

II Corps

8th PSYOP BN (—)
(Nha Trang)

III Corps

6th PSYOP BN
(Bien Hoa)

HQ 4th PSYOP GP
(Saigon)

IV Corps

10th PSYOP BN
(Can Tho)

Figure 8.   Map of PSYOP Unit Locations
*Source:* 4th Psychological Operations Group, *4th Psychological Operations Group: Republic of Vietnam* (Saigon: 4th PSYOP Group, 1969), 3.

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Deborah C. Kidwell, Ph.D.
Department of Military History
USACGSC
1 Reynolds Ave.
Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-1352

James H. Willbanks, Ph.D.
Department of Military History
USACGSC
1 Reynolds Ave.
Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-1352

LTC Karl D. Zetmeir, MS.
Department of Joint and Multinational Operations
USACGSC
1 Reynolds Ave.
Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-1352

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